MARVEL MASTERWORKS

THE UNCANNY X-MEN

VOLUME 13

THE UNCANNY X-MEN NOS. 201-209
& LONGSHOT NOS. 1-6
CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOHN ROMITA JR,
ANN NOCENTI & ARTHUR ADAMS

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

THE UNCANNY X-MEN

VOLUME 13

COLLECTING

THE UNCANNY X-MEN Nos. 201-209

& LONGSHOT Nos. 1-6

CHRIS CLAREMONT • JOHN ROMITA JR.

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NOS. 201-209 & LONGSHOT NOS. 1-6

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INTRODUCTION
BY CHRIS CLAREMONT

To me, this is Rachel's story.

It opens right after the team's return from Asgard, in the aftermath of the "Asgard Wars." They discover that the team's leader, Scott Summers, has become a father. He and wife Madelyne Pryor-Summers are parents of a brand-new son. As you can see right off the bat, on the splash page crafted by one of the unsung greats of the modern industry—Rick Leonardi—this is a moment of joy for the X-team. Except for one among them: Rachel Summers, the young Phoenix.

Because the parents she remembers are Scott Summers and Jean Grey, and she was an only child. Yet here she is in a past where Jean Grey died at the end of the "Dark Phoenix Saga;" the man she knew as her father has married someone else and now their first-born is a boy. For her, things have suddenly and irrevocably changed. What does this do to her sense of self? How would *you* feel if you suddenly learned that the dad you loved had other children you never knew about? Some of us—myself included—have had to deal with this in our real lives. Here you can see, for better or ill, how I dealt with that on the page.

Along the way, readers are treated to John Romita Jr.'s gifted and sophisticated pencils accented by regular inker Dan Green and a wonderful conclusion by concluding finisher P. Craig Russell. As well as a pair of glorious fill-in issues by guest penciler June Brigman (aided by guest inker Whilce Portacio) and Barry Windsor-Smith.

So what do these stories have to offer, what makes them so special? Why should we care about Rachel?

Think of her as a lost soul whose fundamental memory of her reality is a world at war. She is a stand-in for all the children of the world who have lived through fierce trauma and have to find a way to move forward. Think of Yemen, Syria, Armenia—far too many places that even as I write are war-torn, yet with children living out their lives in the most difficult of circumstances.

When she was barely a grade school child, Charles Xavier was killed before her eyes. Her parents were lost in the conflagration that followed, as mutants and super-beings alike were slaughtered by the increasingly powerful Sentinels and the humans—like Ahab—who thought they were the robots' masters. Although confined to a single hemisphere, this was the most brutal and merciless war in human history. And, sadly, to Rachel's everlasting horror, one in which she was a predator, a child soldier who was taught that killing was just.

The child was conditioned and genetically engineered to become a Hound. She hunted mutants so the Sentinels could capture the ones they needed and slaughter everyone else. Until she was rescued—a story told elsewhere—she was the prime iteration from which the rest of that malevolent breed derived. She may now be free in body, but the memories of what she saw and did will haunt her forever.

To that has to be added the simple fact that her mother is the Phoenix, who also became *Dark* Phoenix. Who's Phoenix, you might ask? Dark Phoenix is the destroyer of worlds, an iteration of Death; Phoenix, her primal opposite-antagonist, the passion of Creation, the entity responsible for bringing the Omniverse to life. Rachel is the (slightly) lesser expression of that duality. She is wholly capable of following her mother's lead and was indoctrinated to kill without out mercy. Now, as she deals with her trauma, she struggles to put her dark past behind her, and heal. Like Jean Grey, Rachel is tempted by both paths, unsure whether or not to illuminate the cosmos with the light of its beginning or the fire of its end.

Which means while she possesses awesome potential, she can choose to do great harm. Choice: A huge burden for this young person—for all young people—to bear.

With this arc, you get to see her confront those choices and face the ultimate consequences.

The thing to remember as you make your way through these stories, is that this team of heroes aren't grown-ups. Logan's the oldest, and from his codename—the Wolverine—most readers might well presume that his primary role on the team is as a fighter. They'd be wrong.

The next-oldest of the team is their leader, Ororo, who actually shouldn't be on the team at all, having lost her powers. But she's a natural leader, possessing so strong a character that she holds onto that role against all obstacles. The lesson here is that not all super heroes need super-powers to effect change in the world.

These two are the core of the X-team. The others, regardless of actual age—although most of them are still pretty much in their teens—are by comparison kids. With a lot to learn, about themselves as people as much as their role as super heroes.

None of them more so than Rachel.

She sees evil; she stands against it.

She makes judgments along the way.

And must face the consequences.

I've always looked at comics as a seduction. The readers aren't here to fall in love with the exploits but with the characters—who in turn are defined by the world around them, the adventures they undergo and most important of all, how they interact with their companions—and adversaries—along the way. For me, it's about people.

Those people are how we learn. Their laughter becomes ours; their tragedies are what make us cry. Their triumphs make us cheer. And from those laughs and sobs and cheers comes the hopefully insatiable desire to see what happens next. That's what always brought me back as a reader.

I hope the same applies to you.

Brooklyn, NY
2020

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
WHO WILL LEAD THEM?
65¢
201
JAN
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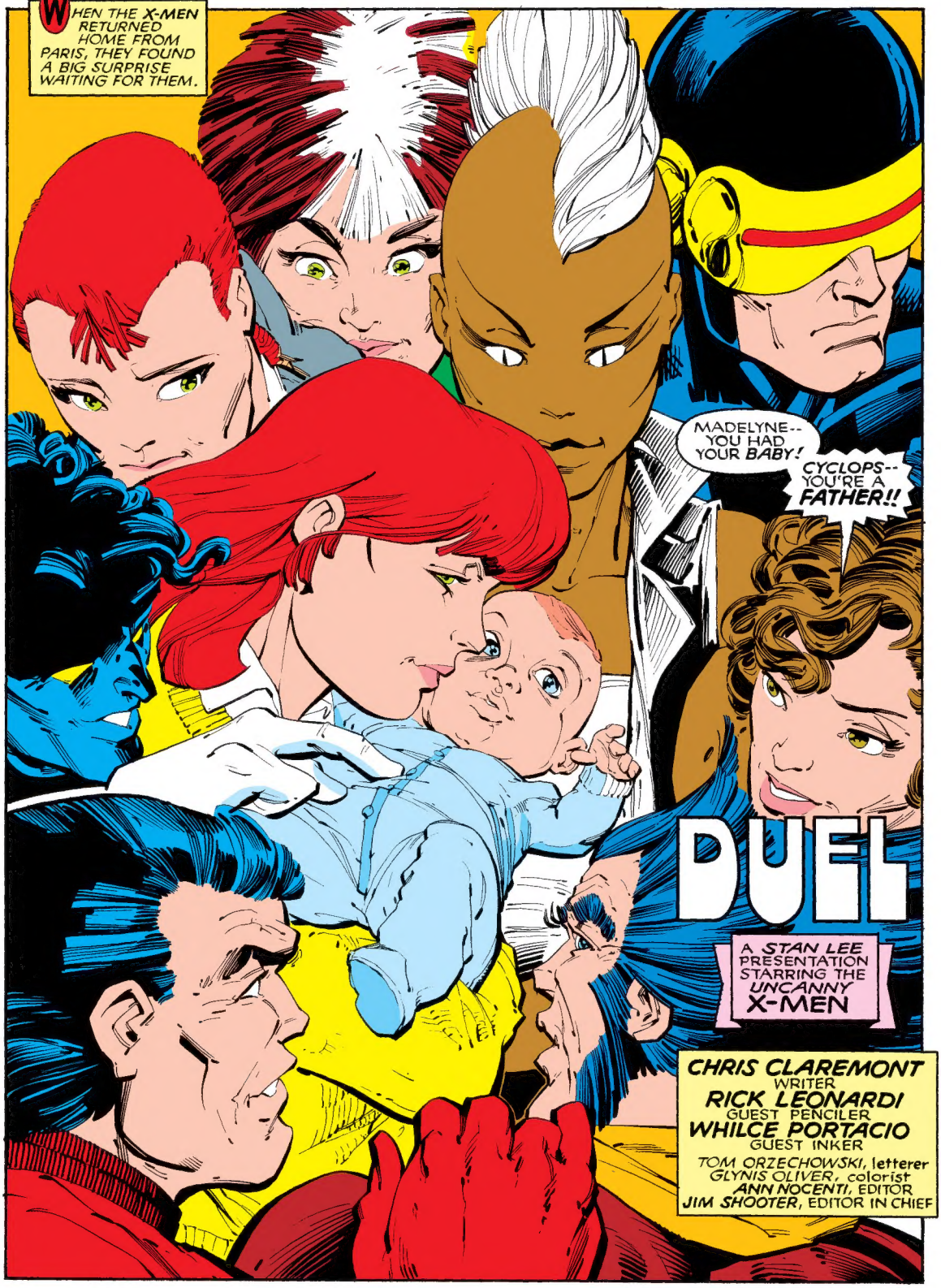
WHEN THE X-MEN RETURNED HOME FROM PARIS, THEY FOUND A BIG SURPRISE WAITING FOR THEM.
MADELYNE--YOU HAD YOUR BABY!
CYCLOPS--YOU'RE A FATHER!!
DUEL
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT
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GUEST PENCILER
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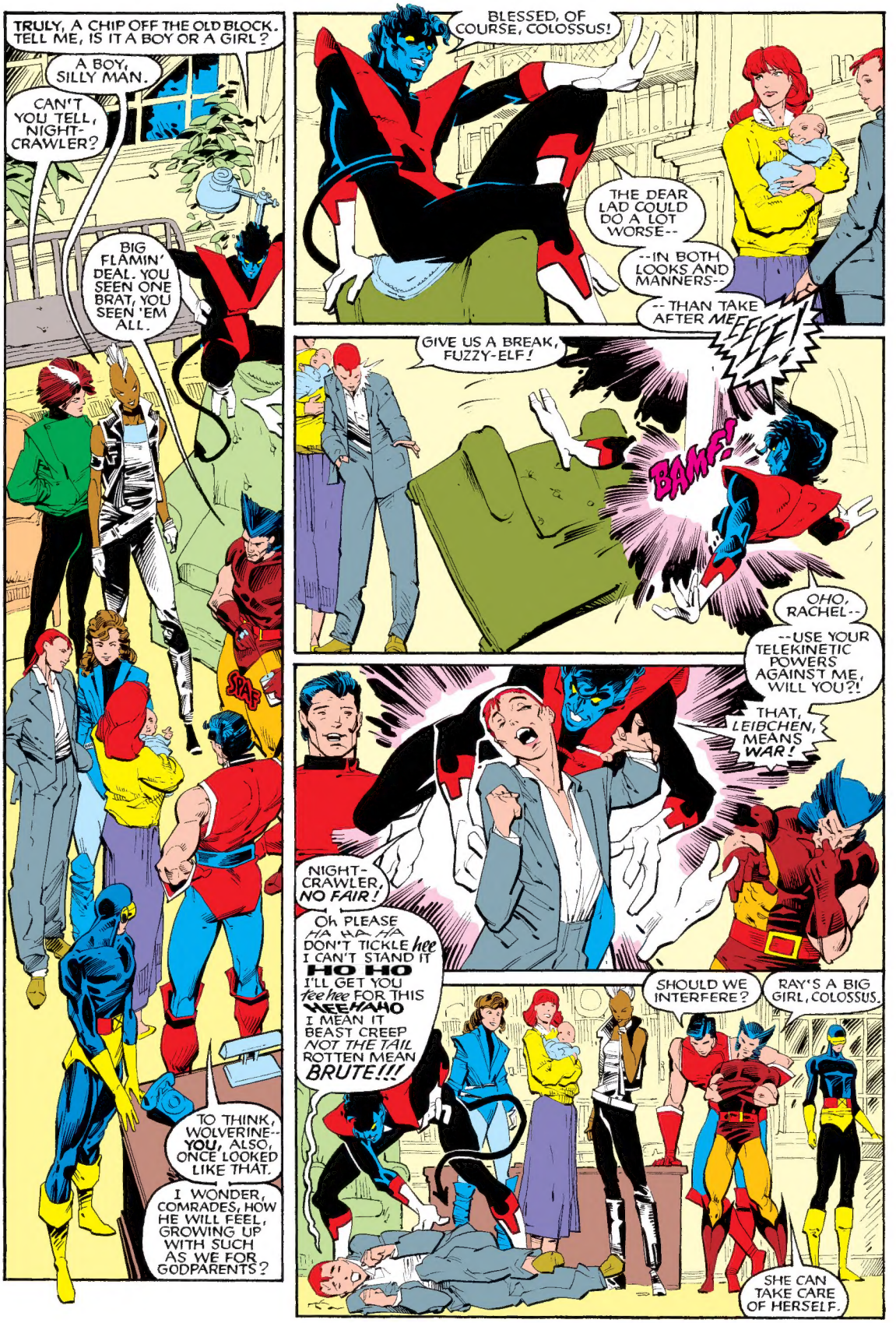
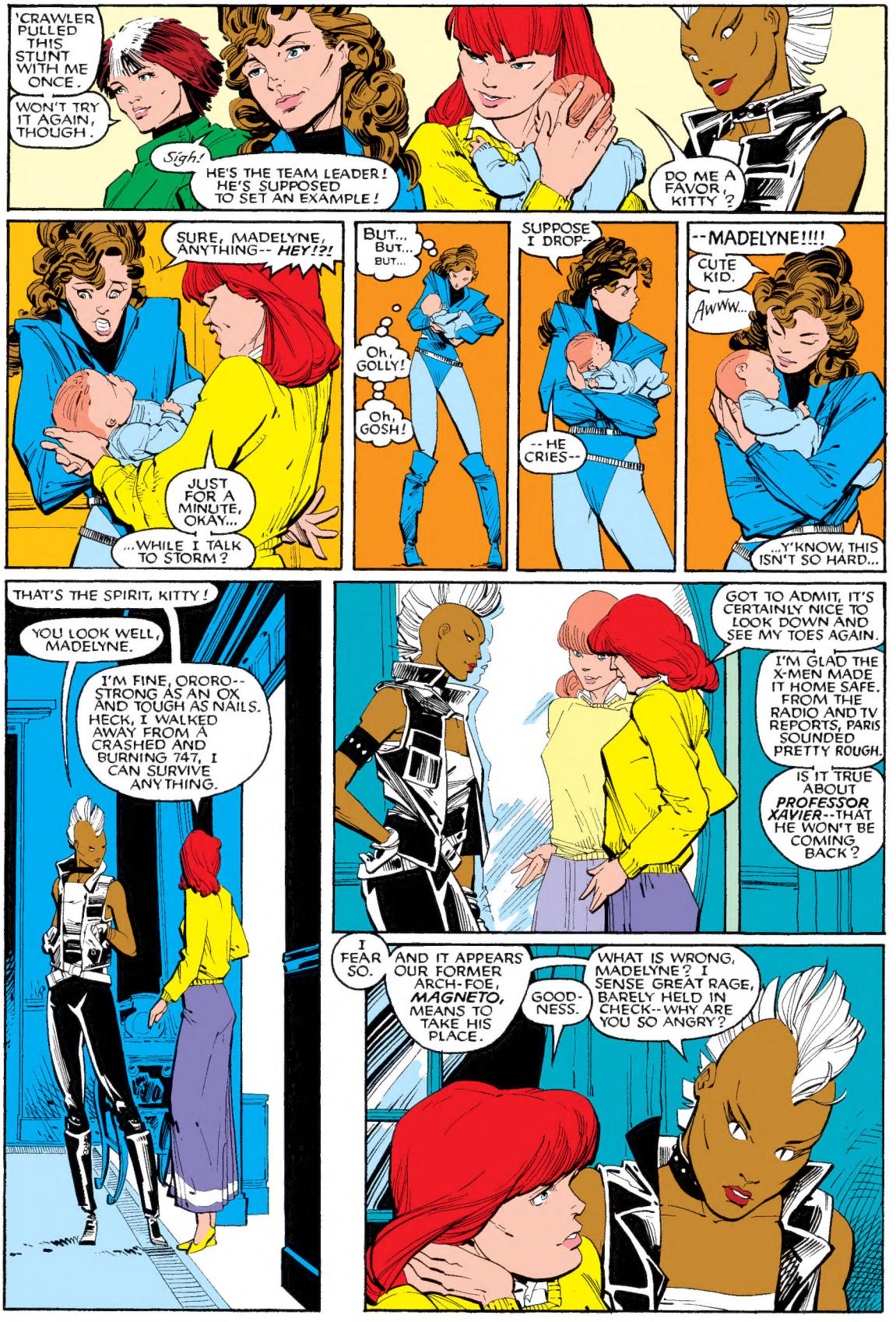
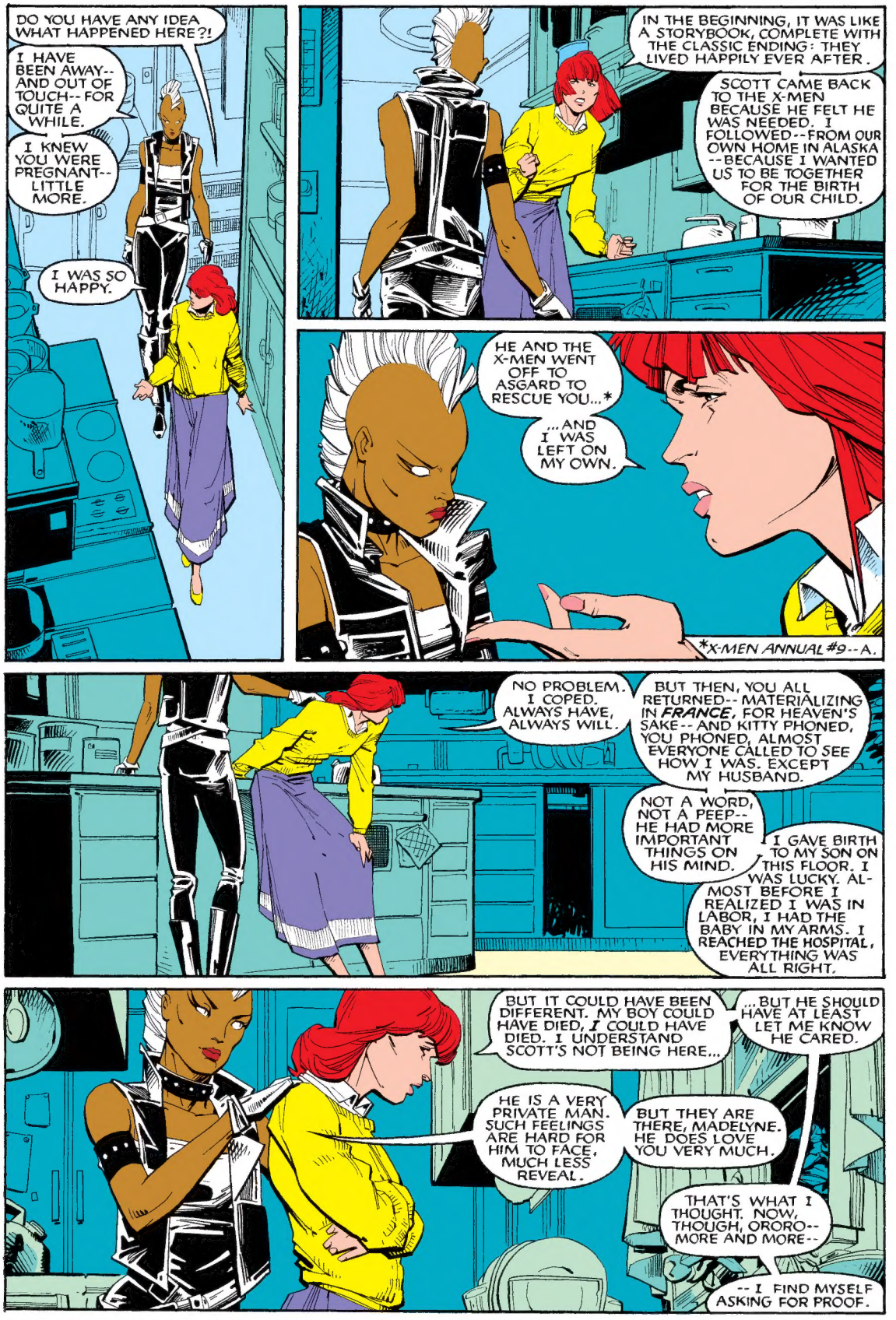
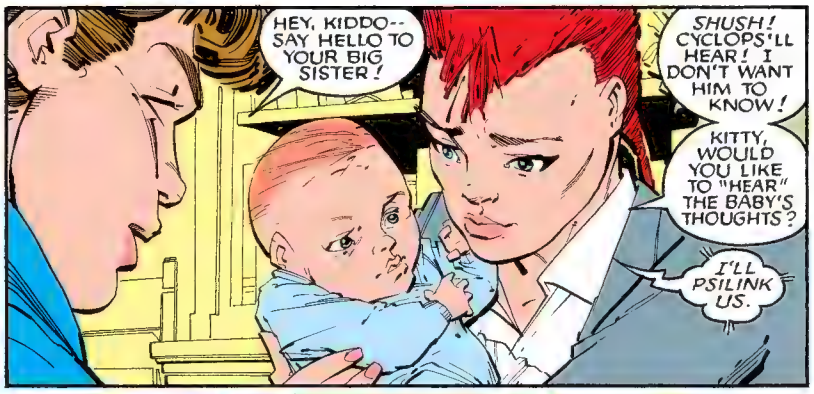
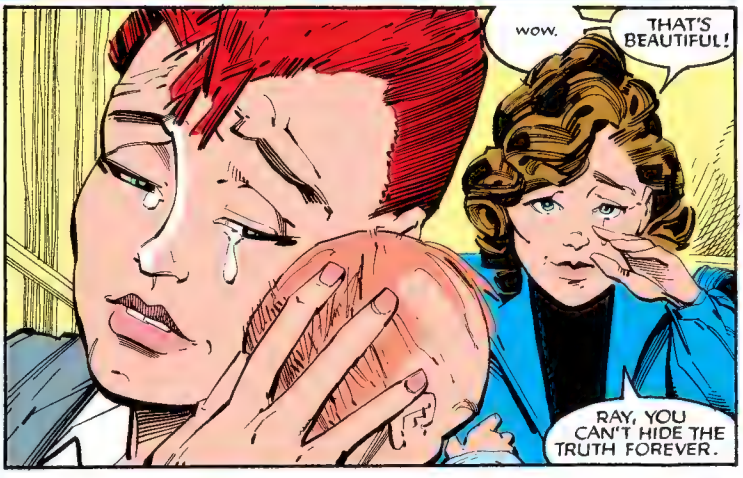

TRULY, A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK. TELL ME, IS IT A BOY OR A GIRL?
A BOY, SILLY MAN.
CAN'T YOU TELL, NIGHT-CRAWLER?
BIG FLAMIN' DEAL. YOU SEEN ONE BRAT, YOU SEEN 'EM ALL.
SPAF
TO THINK, WOLVERINE-- YOU, ALSO, ONCE LOOKED LIKE THAT.
I WONDER, COMRADES, HOW HE WILL FEEL, GROWING UP WITH SUCH AS WE FOR GODPARENTS?
BLESSED, OF COURSE, COLOSSUS!
THE DEAR LAD COULD DO A LOT WORSE--
--IN BOTH LOOKS AND MANNERS--
--THAN TAKE AFTER ME
EEEEE!
GIVE US A BREAK, FUZZY-ELF!
BAMF!
OHO, RACHEL--
--USE YOUR TELEKINETIC POWERS AGAINST ME, WILL YOU?!
THAT, LEIBCHEN, MEANS WAR!
NIGHT-CRAWLER, NO FAIR!
Oh PLEASE HA HA HA DON'T TICKLE hee I CAN'T STAND IT HO HO I'LL GET YOU tee hee FOR THIS HEEHAHO I MEAN IT BEAST CREEP NOT THE TAIL ROTTEN MEAN BRUTE!!!
SHOULD WE INTERFERE?
RAY'S A BIG GIRL, COLOSSUS.
SHE CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.

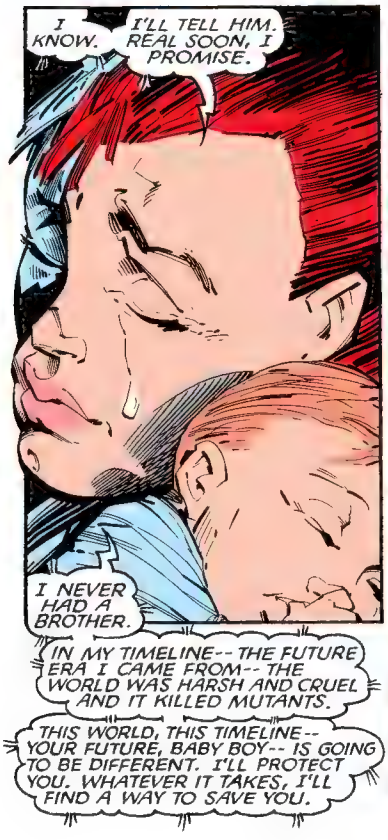

'CRAWLER PULLED THIS STUNT WITH ME ONCE.
WON'T TRY IT AGAIN, THOUGH.
Sigh!
HE'S THE TEAM LEADER! HE'S SUPPOSED TO SET AN EXAMPLE!
DO ME A FAVOR, KITTY?
SURE, MADELYNE, ANYTHING-- HEY!?!
JUST FOR A MINUTE, OKAY...
...WHILE I TALK TO STORM?
BUT... BUT... BUT...
Oh, GOLLY!
Oh, GOSH!
SUPPOSE I DROP--
--HE CRIES--
--MADELYNE!!!!
CUTE KID.
Awww...
...Y'KNOW, THIS ISN'T SO HARD...
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, KITTY!
YOU LOOK WELL, MADELYNE.
I'M FINE, ORORO-- STRONG AS AN OX AND TOUGH AS NAILS. HECK, I WALKED AWAY FROM A CRASHED AND BURNING 747, I CAN SURVIVE ANYTHING.
GOT TO ADMIT, IT'S CERTAINLY NICE TO LOOK DOWN AND SEE MY TOES AGAIN.
I'M GLAD THE X-MEN MADE IT HOME SAFE. FROM THE RADIO AND TV REPORTS, PARIS SOUNDED PRETTY ROUGH.
IS IT TRUE ABOUT PROFESSOR XAVIER--THAT HE WON'T BE COMING BACK?
I FEAR SO.
AND IT APPEARS OUR FORMER ARCH-FOE, MAGNETO, MEANS TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
GOOD-NESS.
WHAT IS WRONG, MADELYNE? I SENSE GREAT RAGE, BARELY HELD IN CHECK--WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?


DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!
I HAVE BEEN AWAY-- AND OUT OF TOUCH-- FOR QUITE A WHILE.
I KNEW YOU WERE PREGNANT-- LITTLE MORE.
I WAS SO HAPPY.
IN THE BEGINNING, IT WAS LIKE A STORYBOOK, COMPLETE WITH THE CLASSIC ENDING: THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.
SCOTT CAME BACK TO THE X-MEN BECAUSE HE FELT HE WAS NEEDED. I FOLLOWED--FROM OUR OWN HOME IN ALASKA --BECAUSE I WANTED US TO BE TOGETHER FOR THE BIRTH OF OUR CHILD.
HE AND THE X-MEN WENT OFF TO ASGARD TO RESCUE YOU...*
...AND I WAS LEFT ON MY OWN.
*X-MEN ANNUAL #9--A.
NO PROBLEM. I COPED. ALWAYS HAVE, ALWAYS WILL.
BUT THEN, YOU ALL RETURNED-- MATERIALIZING IN FRANCE, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE-- AND KITTY PHONED, YOU PHONED, ALMOST EVERYONE CALLED TO SEE HOW I WAS. EXCEPT MY HUSBAND.
NOT A WORD, NOT A PEEP-- HE HAD MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON HIS MIND.
I GAVE BIRTH TO MY SON ON THIS FLOOR. I WAS LUCKY. ALMOST BEFORE I REALIZED I WAS IN LABOR, I HAD THE BABY IN MY ARMS. I REACHED THE HOSPITAL, EVERYTHING WAS ALL RIGHT.
BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. MY BOY COULD HAVE DIED, I COULD HAVE DIED. I UNDERSTAND SCOTT'S NOT BEING HERE...
...BUT HE SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST LET ME KNOW HE CARED.
HE IS A VERY PRIVATE MAN. SUCH FEELINGS ARE HARD FOR HIM TO FACE, MUCH LESS REVEAL.
BUT THEY ARE THERE, MADELYNE. HE DOES LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. NOW, THOUGH, ORORO-- MORE AND MORE--
-- I FIND MYSELF ASKING FOR PROOF.

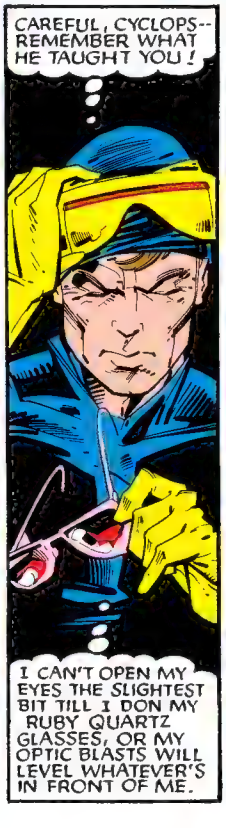
WANT TO HOLD HIM AWHILE, RACHEL?
OKAY, I GUESS.
WHAT A FACE-- HE LIKES YOU!

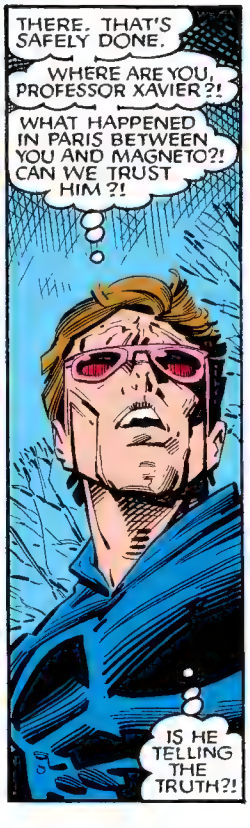

HEY, KIDDO-- SAY HELLO TO YOUR BIG SISTER!
SHUSH! CYCLOPS'LL HEAR! I DON'T WANT HIM TO KNOW!
KITTY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO "HEAR" THE BABY'S THOUGHTS?
I'LL PSILINK US.

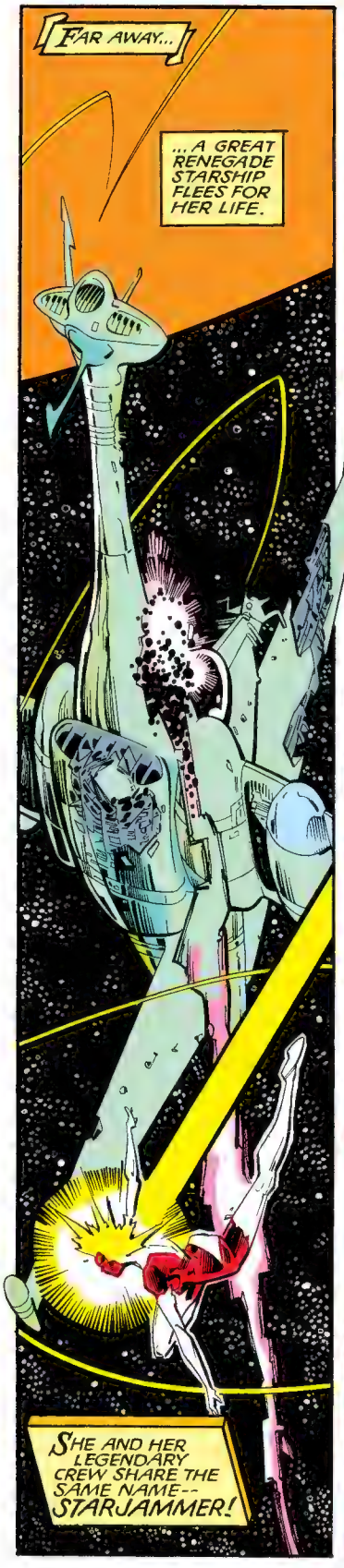

WOW.
THAT'S BEAUTIFUL!
RAY, YOU CAN'T HIDE THE TRUTH FOREVER.

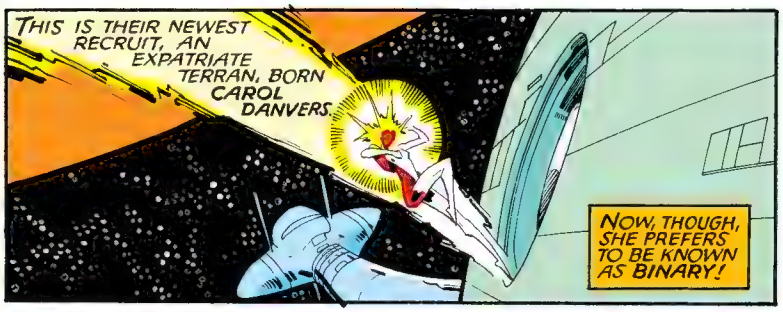

I KNOW.
I'LL TELL HIM. REAL SOON, I PROMISE.
I NEVER HAD A BROTHER.
IN MY TIMELINE-- THE FUTURE ERA I CAME FROM-- THE WORLD WAS HARSH AND CRUEL AND IT KILLED MUTANTS.
THIS WORLD, THIS TIMELINE-- YOUR FUTURE, BABY BOY-- IS GOING TO BE DIFFERENT. I'LL PROTECT YOU. WHATEVER IT TAKES, I'LL FIND A WAY TO SAVE YOU.

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...
I'M A FATHER. I HAVE A SON.
WHY AREN'T YOU HERE, PROFESSOR-- TO SHARE THAT JOY WITH ME?

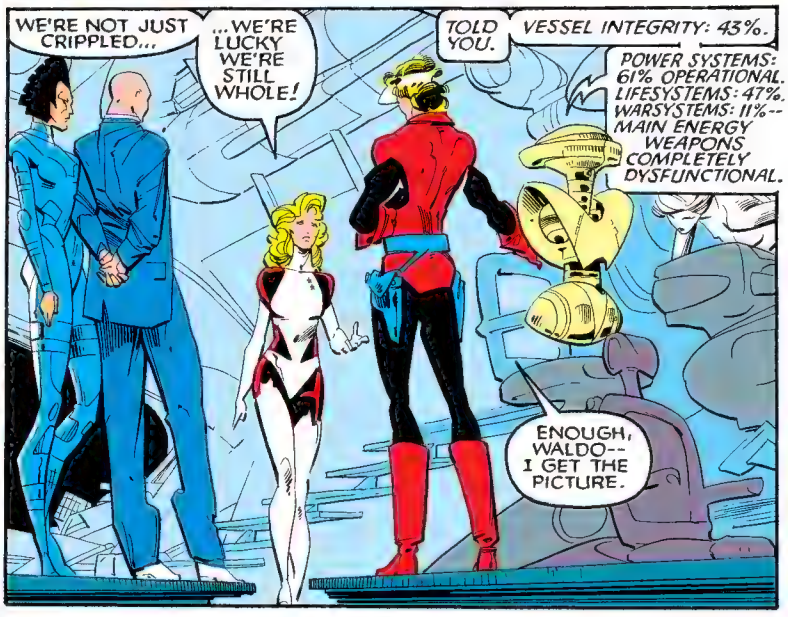

CAREFUL, CYCLOPS-- REMEMBER WHAT HE TAUGHT YOU!
I CAN'T OPEN MY EYES THE SLIGHTEST BIT TILL I DON MY RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES, OR MY OPTIC BLASTS WILL LEVEL WHATEVER'S IN FRONT OF ME.

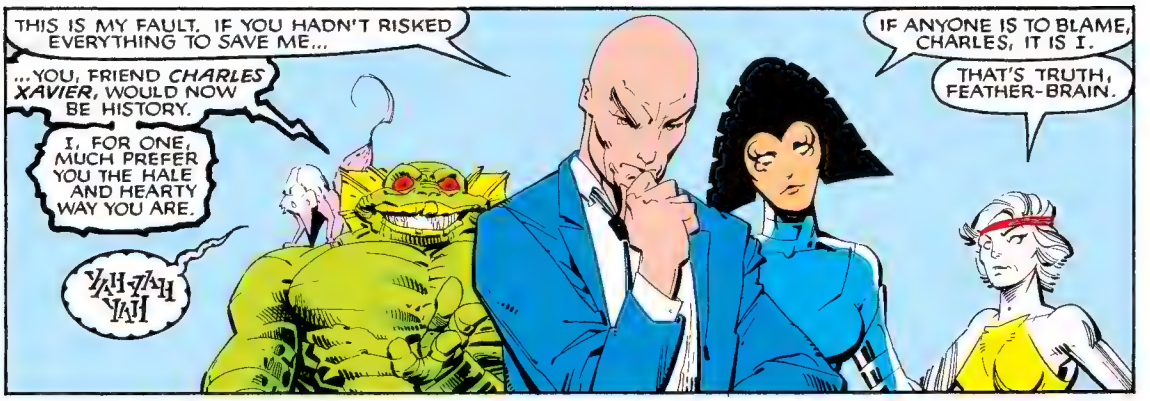

THERE. THAT'S SAFELY DONE.
WHERE ARE YOU, PROFESSOR XAVIER?!
WHAT HAPPENED IN PARIS BETWEEN YOU AND MAGNETO?! CAN WE TRUST HIM?!
IS HE TELLING THE TRUTH?!


FAR AWAY...
...A GREAT RENEGADE STARSHIP FLEES FOR HER LIFE.
SHE AND HER LEGENDARY CREW SHARE THE SAME NAME-- STARJAMMER!


THIS IS THEIR NEWEST RECRUIT, AN EXPATRIATE TERRAN, BORN CAROL DANVERS.
NOW, THOUGH, SHE PREFERS TO BE KNOWN AS BINARY!

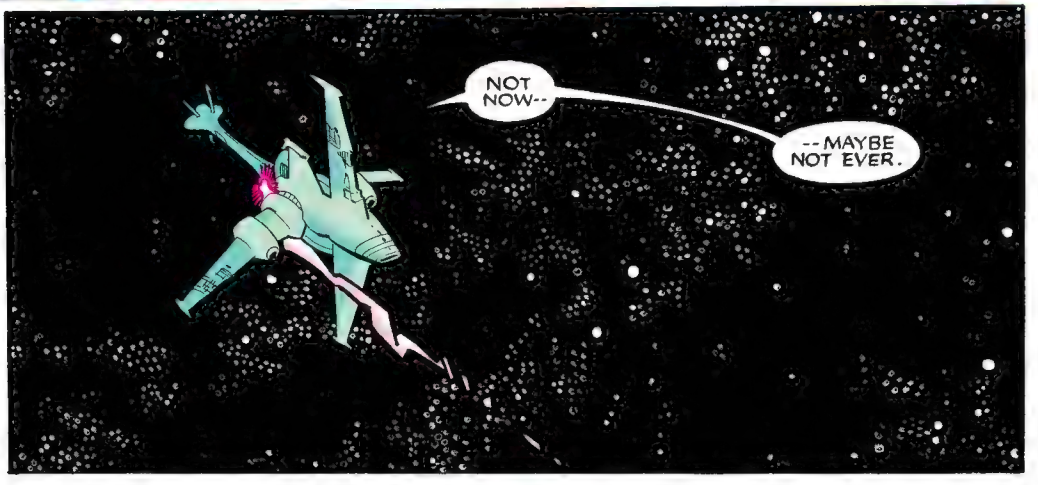
WELCOME, BINARY-- HOW WENT YOUR RECONNAISANCE?
LOUSY, CH'OD.
I'VE COVERED THE HULL FROM STEM TO STERN, CORSAIR. I'M SORRY, BUT EVERYTHING I'VE SEEN ONLY BEARS OUT WALDO'S ASSESSMENT.

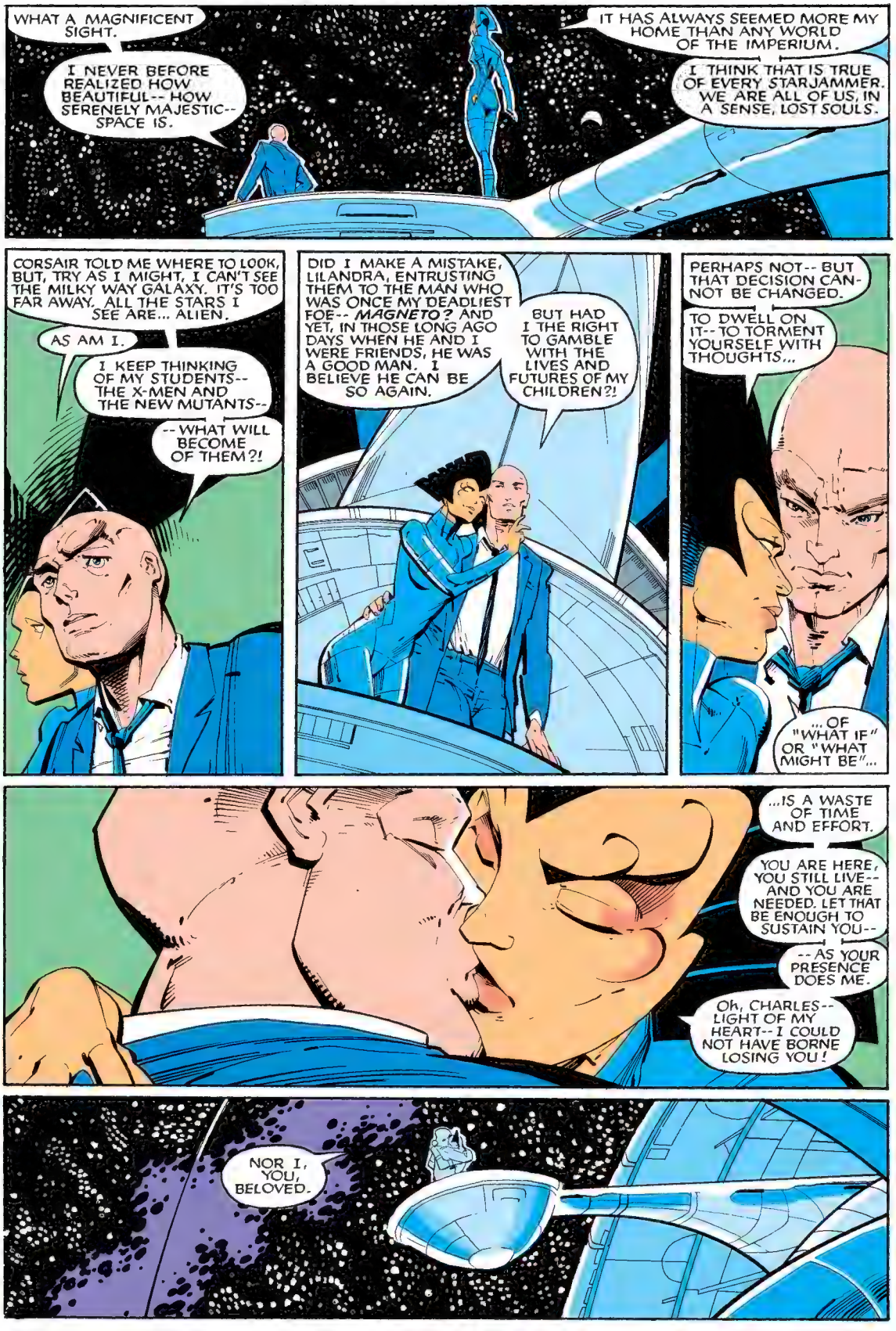

WE'RE NOT JUST CRIPPLED...
...WE'RE LUCKY WE'RE STILL WHOLE!
TOLD YOU.
VESSEL INTEGRITY: 43%.
POWER SYSTEMS: 61% OPERATIONAL. LIFESYSTEMS: 47%. WARSYSTEMS: 11%-- MAIN ENERGY WEAPONS COMPLETELY DYSFUNCTIONAL.
ENOUGH, WALDO-- I GET THE PICTURE.

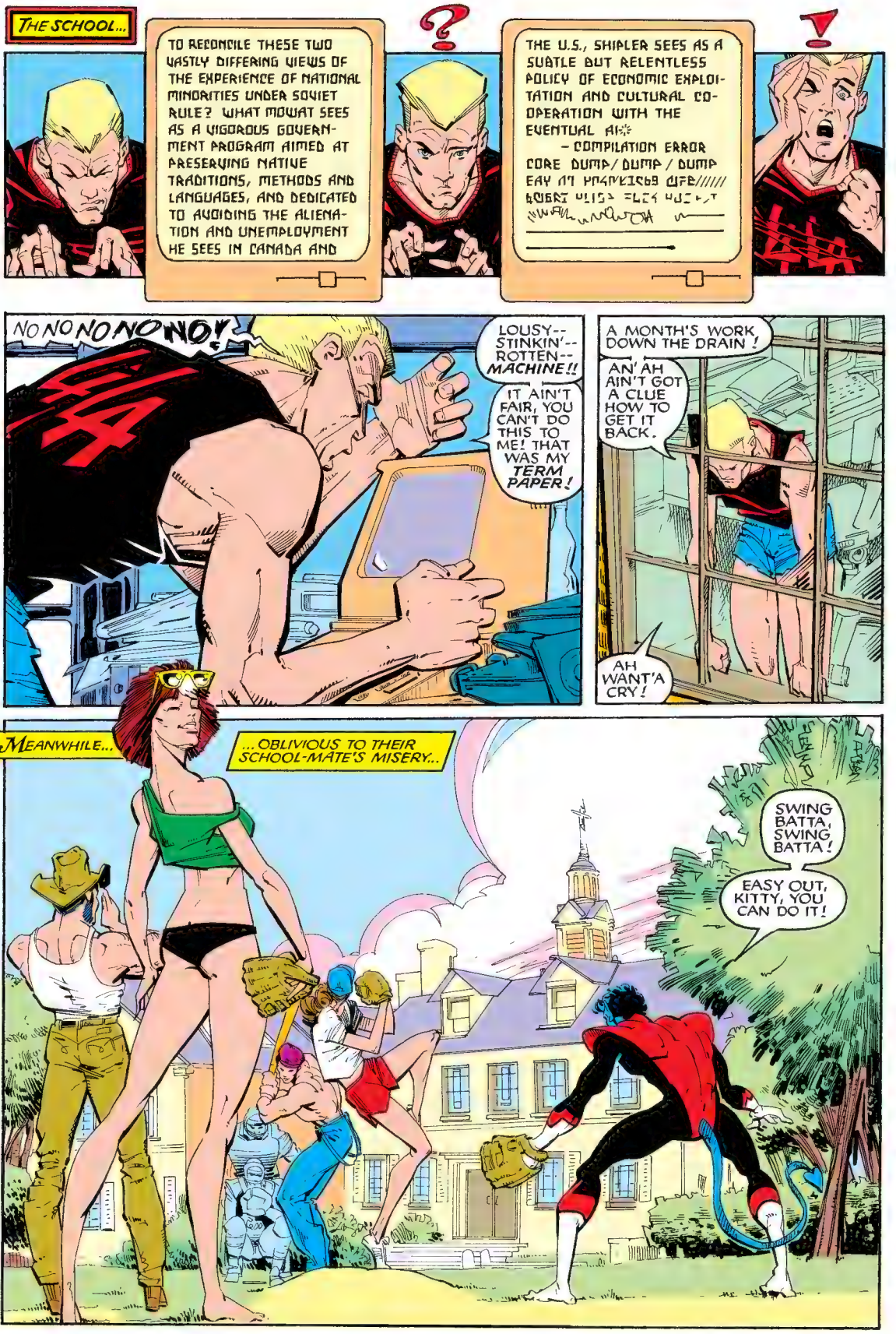

THIS IS MY FAULT. IF YOU HADN'T RISKED EVERYTHING TO SAVE ME...
...YOU, FRIEND CHARLES XAVIER, WOULD NOW BE HISTORY.
I, FOR ONE, MUCH PREFER YOU THE HALE AND HEARTY WAY YOU ARE.
HA! HA-HA-HA!
IF ANYONE IS TO BLAME, CHARLES, IT IS I.
THAT'S TRUTH, FEATHER-BRAIN.

GIVE IT A REST, HEPZIBAH. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE, THIS SCRAPPING AMONGST OURSELVES ISN'T GETTING US ANYWHERE.
NOR, BOSS, WILL THE ENGINES FOR MUCH LONGER, IF SOME VERY HEAVY-DUTY REPAIRS AREN'T UNDERTAKEN IMMEDIATELY.
THE ULTRA-LIGHT SUPER-STARDRIVE IS TOTALLED, SO WE HAVEN'T A PRAYER OF REACHING EARTH ON OUR OWN.

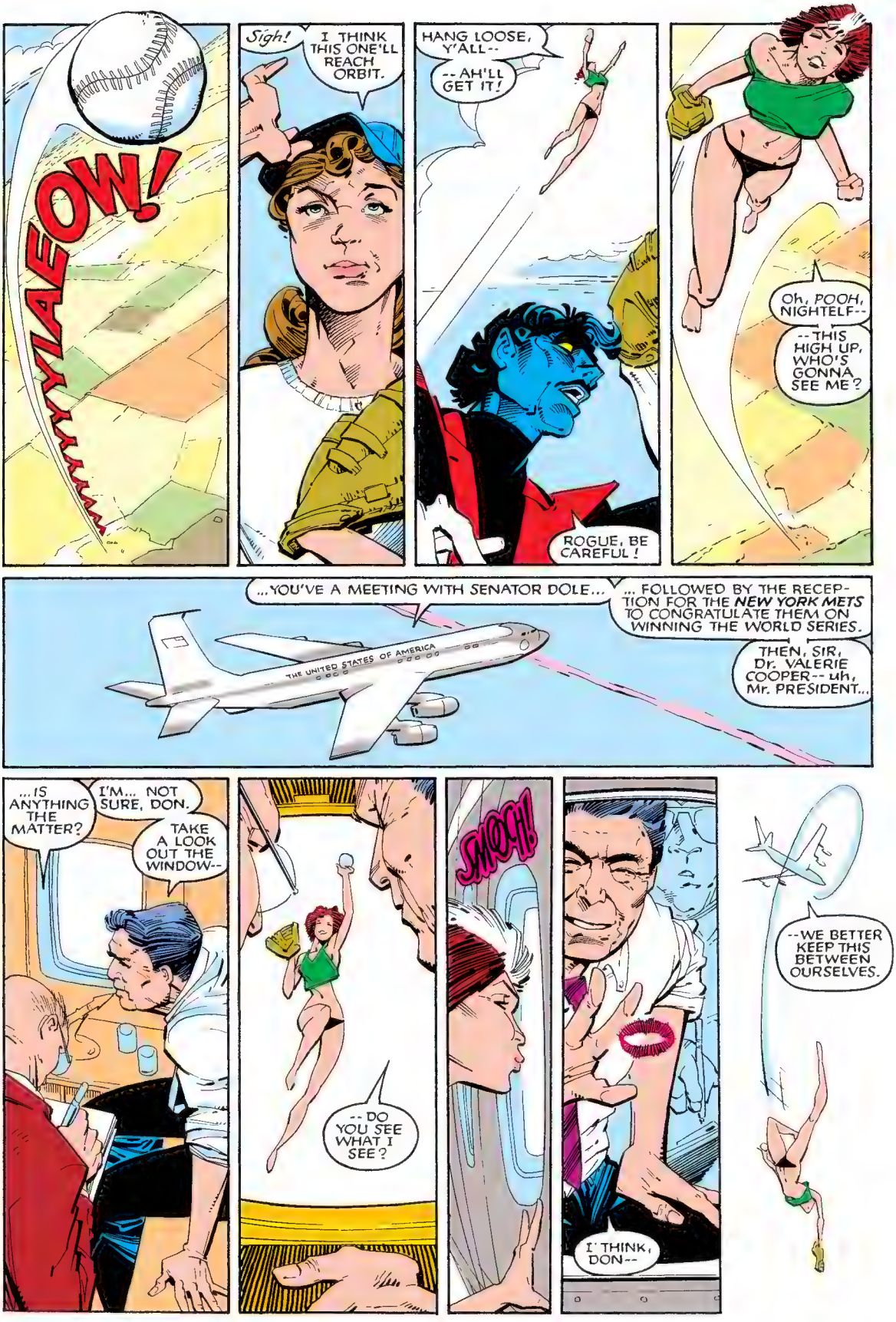
USING THE REGULAR WARP SYSTEM WOULD MEAN A JOURNEY OF CENTURIES--AND THANKS TO THE RAID THAT RESCUED YOU, EVERY SHI'AR STARGATE WILL BE TOO HEAVILY DEFENDED FOR US TO TRY THAT ROUTE.
AND FINALLY, THERE'S A HUNTER-KILLER SQUADRON HOT ON OUR TRAIL -- WHICH MEANS OUR OWN SURVIVAL IS STILL IN CONSIDERABLE DOUBT.
I'M SORRY, CHARLES--BUT THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN TAKE YOU HOME.

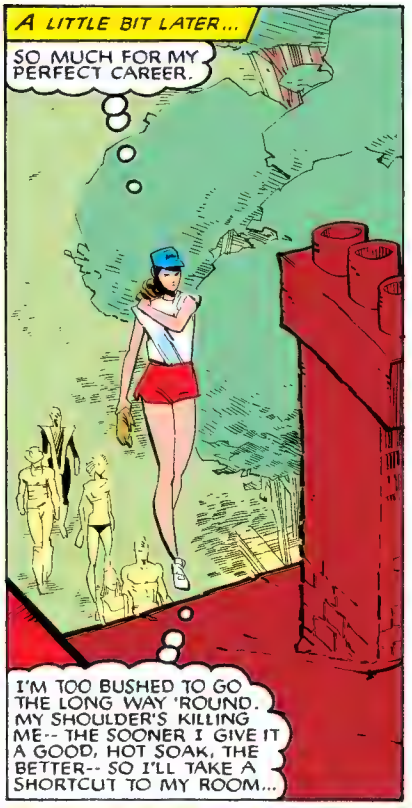

NOT NOW--
--MAYBE NOT EVER.

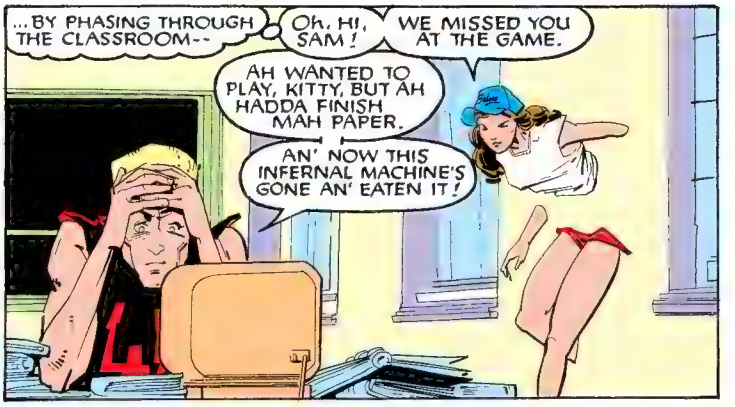

WHAT A MAGNIFICENT SIGHT.
I NEVER BEFORE REALIZED HOW BEAUTIFUL-- HOW SERENELY MAJESTIC-- SPACE IS.
IT HAS ALWAYS SEEMED MORE MY HOME THAN ANY WORLD OF THE IMPERIUM.
I THINK THAT IS TRUE OF EVERY STARJAMMER. WE ARE ALL OF US, IN A SENSE, LOST SOULS.
CORSAIR TOLD ME WHERE TO LOOK, BUT, TRY AS I MIGHT, I CAN'T SEE THE MILKY WAY GALAXY. IT'S TOO FAR AWAY. ALL THE STARS I SEE ARE... ALIEN.
AS AM I.
I KEEP THINKING OF MY STUDENTS-- THE X-MEN AND THE NEW MUTANTS--
--WHAT WILL BECOME OF THEM?!
DID I MAKE A MISTAKE, LILANDRA, ENTRUSTING THEM TO THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE MY DEADLIEST FOE-- MAGNETO? AND YET, IN THOSE LONG AGO DAYS WHEN HE AND I WERE FRIENDS, HE WAS A GOOD MAN. I BELIEVE HE CAN BE SO AGAIN.
BUT HAD I THE RIGHT TO GAMBLE WITH THE LIVES AND FUTURES OF MY CHILDREN?!
PERHAPS NOT-- BUT THAT DECISION CANNOT BE CHANGED.
TO DWELL ON IT-- TO TORMENT YOURSELF WITH THOUGHTS...
...OF "WHAT IF" OR "WHAT MIGHT BE"...
...IS A WASTE OF TIME AND EFFORT.
YOU ARE HERE, YOU STILL LIVE-- AND YOU ARE NEEDED. LET THAT BE ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN YOU--
--AS YOUR PRESENCE DOES ME.
Oh, CHARLES-- LIGHT OF MY HEART-- I COULD NOT HAVE BORNE LOSING YOU!
NOR I, YOU, BELOVED.

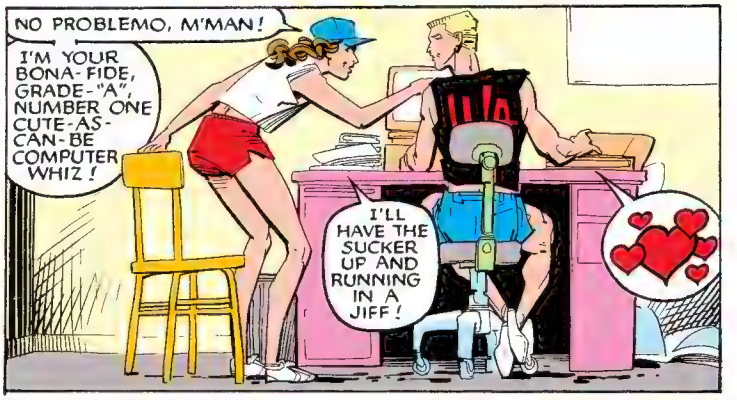

THE SCHOOL...
TO RECONCILE THESE TWO VASTLY DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF NATIONAL MINORITIES UNDER SOVIET RULE? WHAT MOWAT SEES AS A VIGOROUS GOVERNMENT PROGRAM AIMED AT PRESERVING NATIVE TRADITIONS, METHODS AND LANGUAGES, AND DEDICATED TO AVOIDING THE ALIENATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT HE SEES IN CANADA AND
?
THE U.S., SHIPLER SEES AS A SUBTLE BUT RELENTLESS POLICY OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION AND CULTURAL CO-OPERATION WITH THE EVENTUAL AI*
– COMPILATION ERROR
CORE DUMP/ DUMP / DUMP
!
NO NO NO NO NO!
LOUSY-- STINKIN'-- ROTTEN-- MACHINE!!
IT AIN'T FAIR, YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! THAT WAS MY TERM PAPER!
A MONTH'S WORK DOWN THE DRAIN!
AN' AH AIN'T GOT A CLUE HOW TO GET IT BACK.
AH WANT'A CRY!
MEANWHILE...
...OBLIVIOUS TO THEIR SCHOOL-MATE'S MISERY...
SWING BATTA, SWING BATTA!
EASY OUT, KITTY, YOU CAN DO IT!

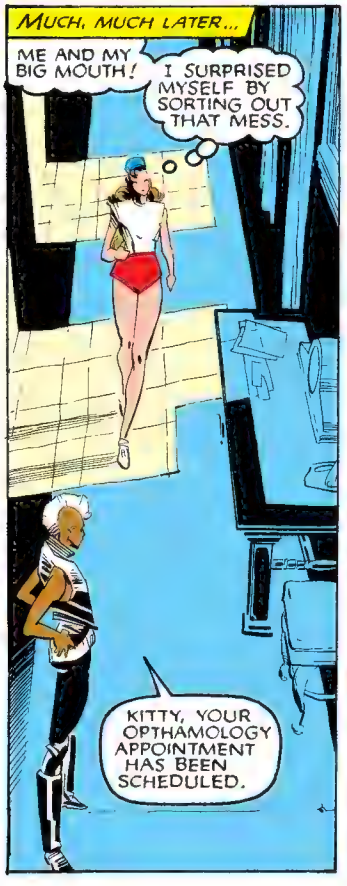
STEEE-RIKE TWO!
CHOMP
KID HAS A WICKED FASTBALL.
JA.
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO BE A DANCER, KATZCHEN?
WHO SAYS I CAN'T DO BOTH?!
WOLVERINE -- I'M WORRIED, ABOUT SCOTT AND MADELYNE AND RACHEL.
THERE'S TROUBLE AHEAD, MEIN FREUND -- WHAT SHOULD WE DO?!
MAYBE, FOR ONCE, LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.
THIS IS CERTAIN TO AFFECT CYCLOPS'S ABILITY TO LEAD THE TEAM.
WHO SAYS HE'S GOING TO?
SKRUNCH!
HERE IT COMES, COLOSSUS--
--MY FAST-BALL!
POW!

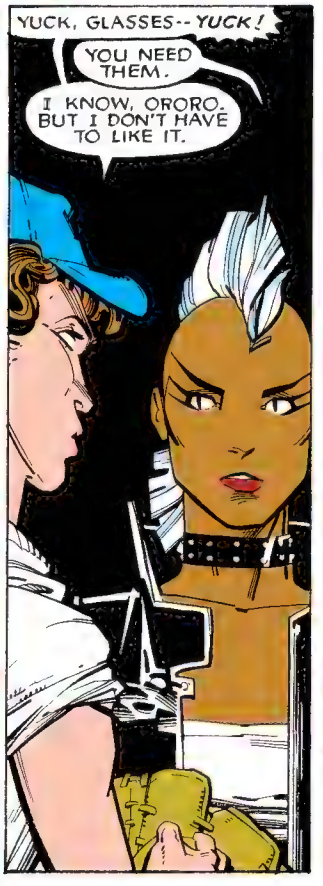

YYIAEOW!
Sigh!
I THINK THIS ONE'LL REACH ORBIT.
HANG LOOSE, Y'ALL--
--AH'LL GET IT!
ROGUE, BE CAREFUL!
Oh, POOH, NIGHTELF--
--THIS HIGH UP, WHO'S GONNA SEE ME?
...YOU'VE A MEETING WITH SENATOR DOLE...
... FOLLOWED BY THE RECEPTION FOR THE NEW YORK METS TO CONGRATULATE THEM ON WINNING THE WORLD SERIES.
THEN, SIR, Dr. VALERIE COOPER-- uh, Mr. PRESIDENT...
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
...IS ANYTHING THE MATTER?
I'M... NOT SURE, DON.
TAKE A LOOK OUT THE WINDOW--
--DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?
SMOOCH!
I THINK, DON--
--WE BETTER KEEP THIS BETWEEN OURSELVES.


A LITTLE BIT LATER...
SO MUCH FOR MY PERFECT CAREER.
I'M TOO BUSHED TO GO THE LONG WAY 'ROUND. MY SHOULDER'S KILLING ME-- THE SOONER I GIVE IT A GOOD, HOT SOAK, THE BETTER-- SO I'LL TAKE A SHORTCUT TO MY ROOM...

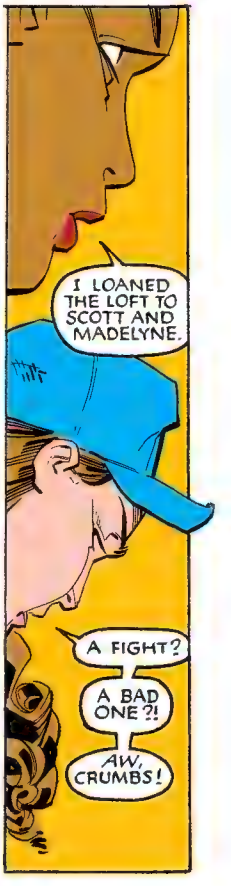

...BY PHASING THROUGH THE CLASSROOM--
Oh, HI, SAM!
WE MISSED YOU AT THE GAME.
AH WANTED TO PLAY, KITTY, BUT AH HADDA FINISH MAH PAPER.
AN' NOW THIS INFERNAL MACHINE'S GONE AN' EATEN IT!

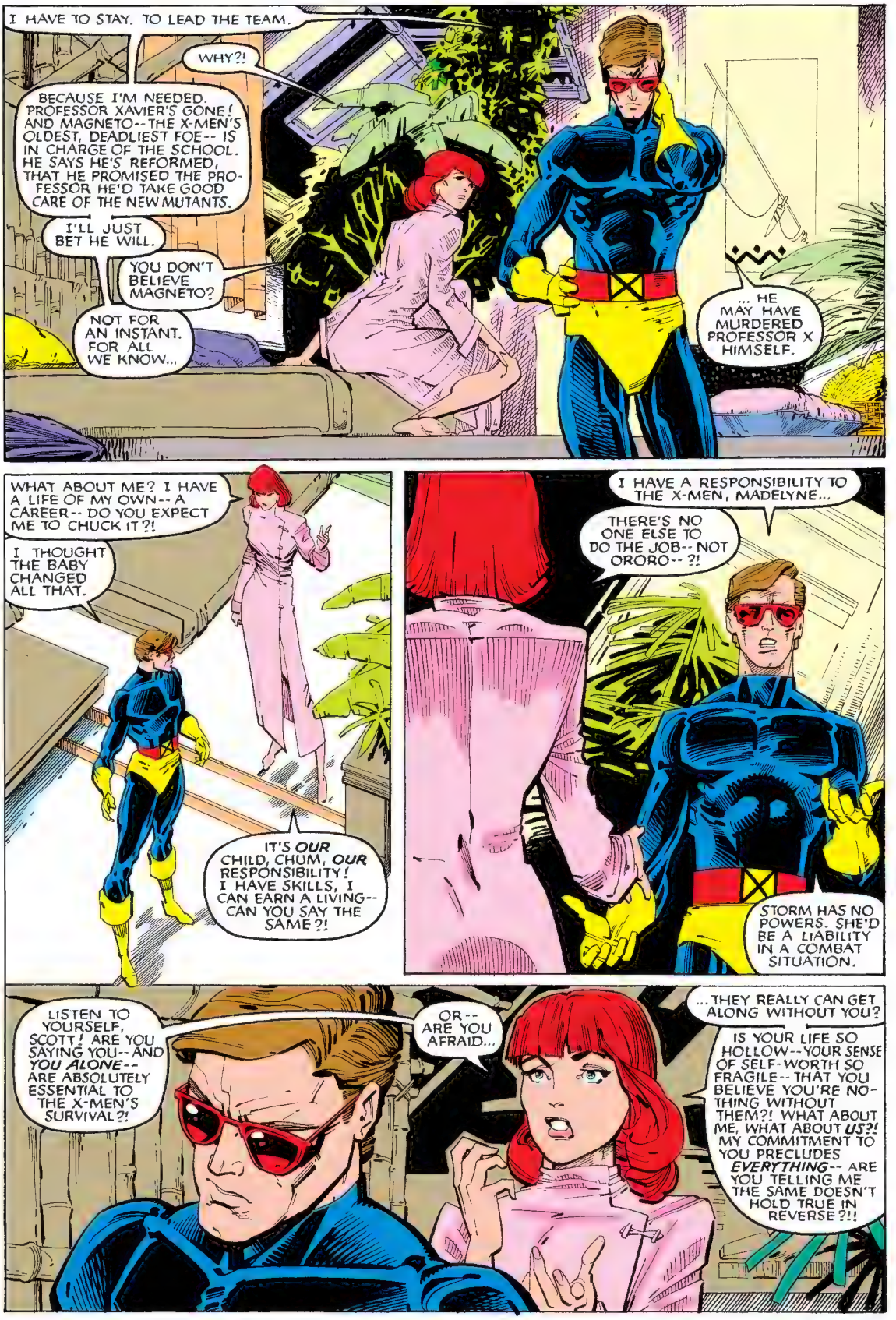

NO PROBLEMO, M'MAN!
I'M YOUR BONA-FIDE, GRADE-"A", NUMBER ONE CUTE-AS-CAN-BE COMPUTER WHIZ!
I'LL HAVE THE SUCKER UP AND RUNNING IN A JIFF!

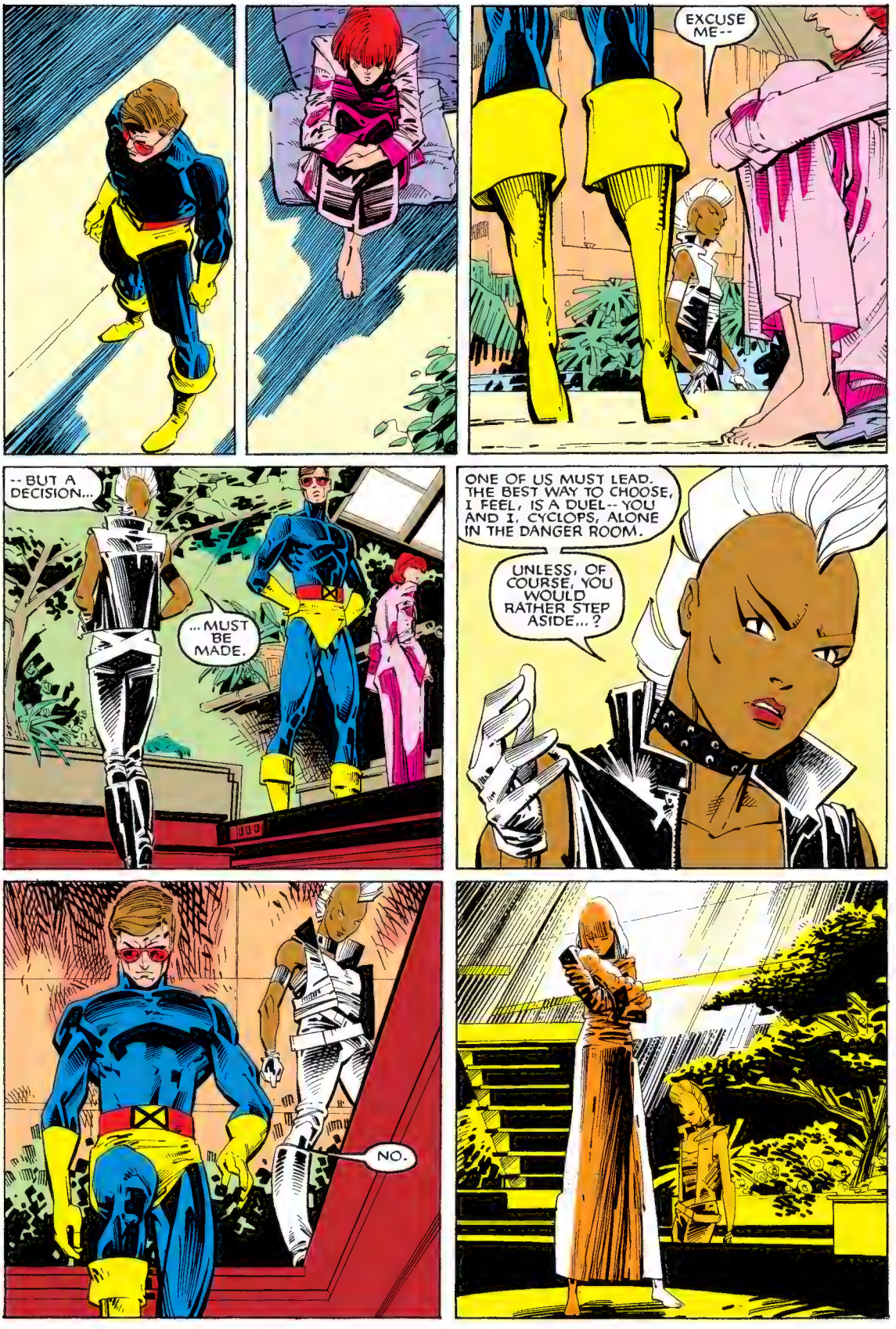

MUCH, MUCH LATER...
ME AND MY BIG MOUTH!
I SURPRISED MYSELF BY SORTING OUT THAT MESS.
KITTY, YOUR OPTHAMOLOGY APPOINTMENT HAS BEEN SCHEDULED.

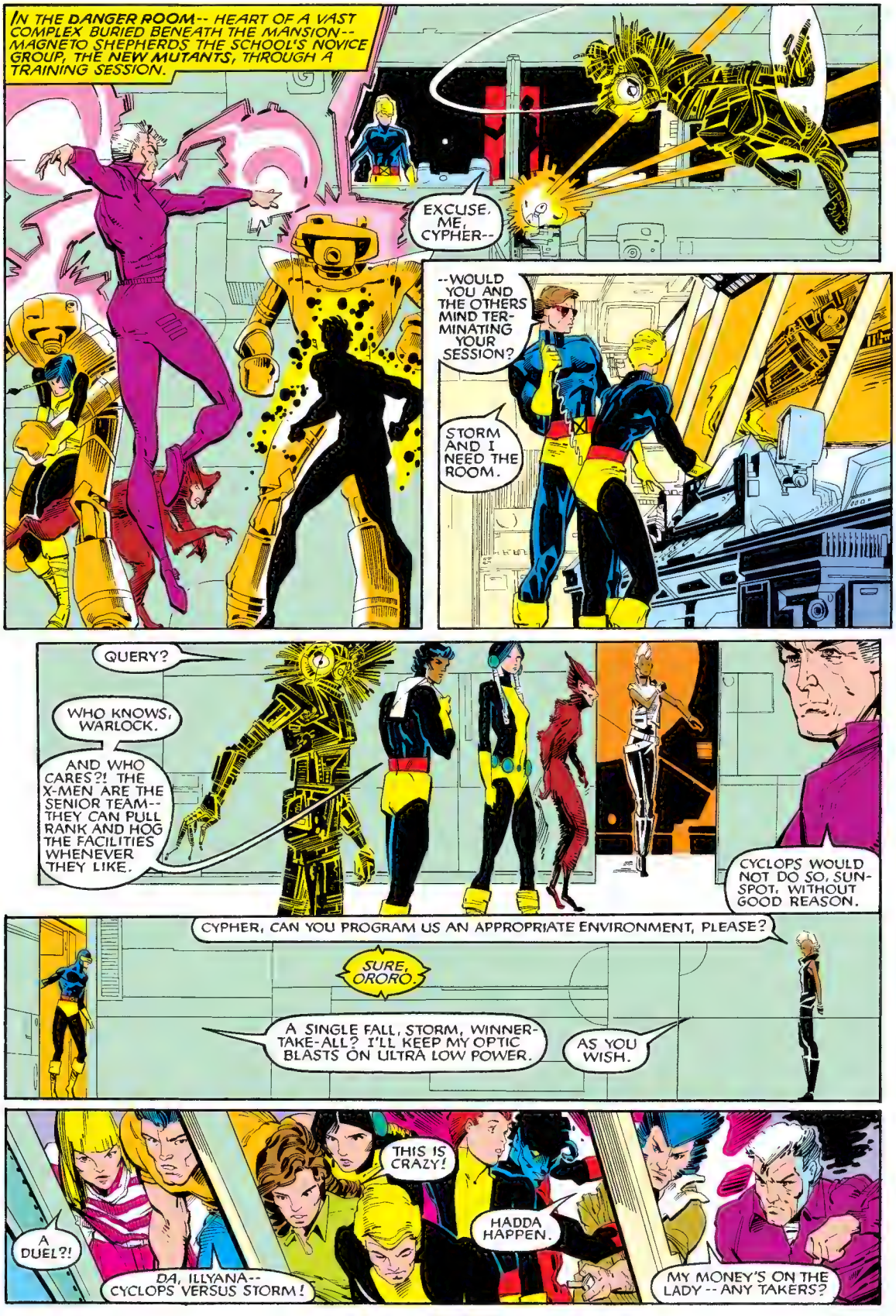

YUCK, GLASSES--YUCK!
YOU NEED THEM.
I KNOW, ORORO. BUT I DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT.

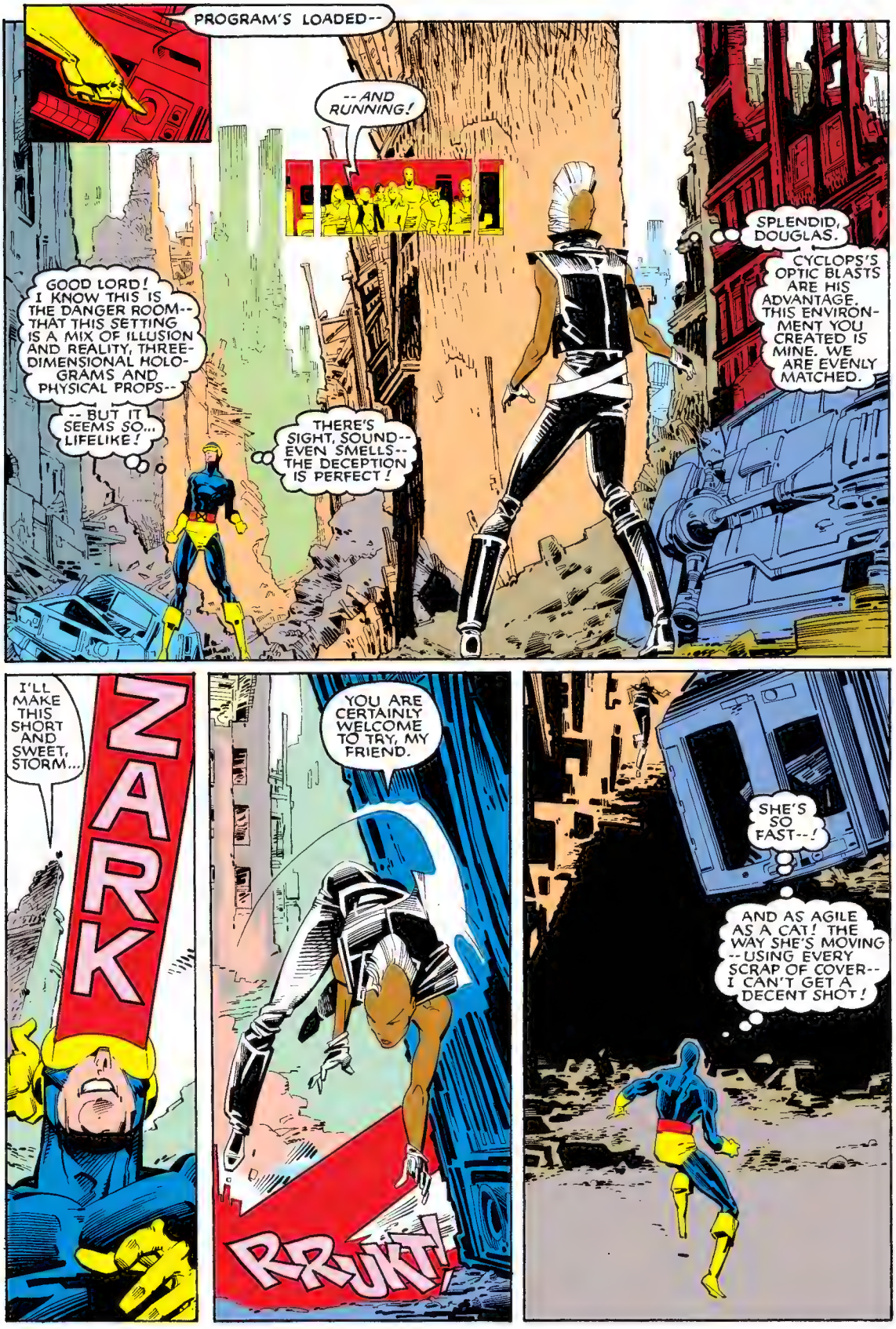
DO ME A FAVOR, PLEASE, CAT, AND TAKE YOUR SHOWER IN THE GYM...?
Babooa SLUGGERS
WHY CAN'T I USE MY ROOM-- WHAT'S THAT?!
WHO'S YELLING?
Babo SLUGG
ORORO, IT'S COMING FROM YOUR ATTIC!


I LOANED THE LOFT TO SCOTT AND MADELYNE.
A FIGHT?
A BAD ONE?!
AW, CRUMBS!

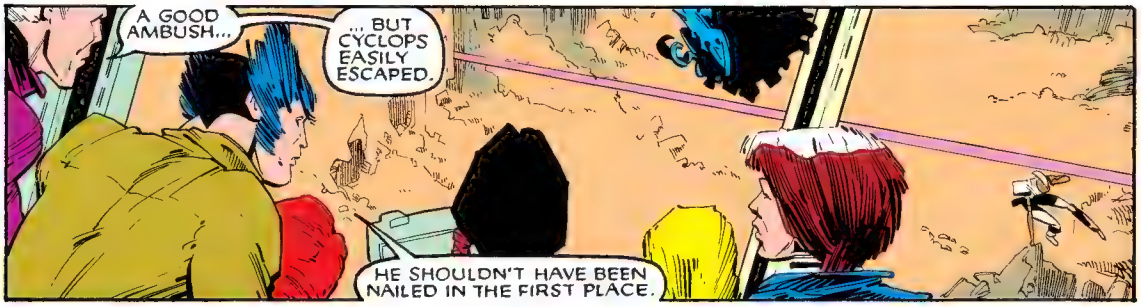

I HAVE TO STAY. TO LEAD THE TEAM.
WHY?!
BECAUSE I'M NEEDED. PROFESSOR XAVIER'S GONE! AND MAGNETO--THE X-MEN'S OLDEST, DEADLIEST FOE-- IS IN CHARGE OF THE SCHOOL. HE SAYS HE'S REFORMED, THAT HE PROMISED THE PROFESSOR HE'D TAKE GOOD CARE OF THE NEW MUTANTS.
I'LL JUST BET HE WILL.
YOU DON'T BELIEVE MAGNETO?
NOT FOR AN INSTANT. FOR ALL WE KNOW...
... HE MAY HAVE MURDERED PROFESSOR X HIMSELF.
WHAT ABOUT ME? I HAVE A LIFE OF MY OWN-- A CAREER-- DO YOU EXPECT ME TO CHUCK IT?!
I THOUGHT THE BABY CHANGED ALL THAT.
IT'S *OUR* CHILD, CHUM, *OUR* RESPONSIBILITY! I HAVE SKILLS, I CAN EARN A LIVING-- CAN YOU SAY THE SAME?!
I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE X-MEN, MADELYNE...
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE TO DO THE JOB-- NOT ORORO-- ?!
STORM HAS NO POWERS. SHE'D BE A LIABILITY IN A COMBAT SITUATION.
LISTEN TO YOURSELF, SCOTT! ARE YOU SAYING YOU-- AND *YOU ALONE*-- ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE X-MEN'S SURVIVAL?!
OR-- ARE YOU AFRAID...
...THEY REALLY CAN GET ALONG WITHOUT YOU?
IS YOUR LIFE SO HOLLOW--YOUR SENSE OF SELF-WORTH SO FRAGILE-- THAT YOU BELIEVE YOU'RE NOTHING WITHOUT THEM?! WHAT ABOUT ME, WHAT ABOUT *US?!* MY COMMITMENT TO YOU PRECLUDES *EVERYTHING*-- ARE YOU TELLING ME THE SAME DOESN'T HOLD TRUE IN REVERSE?!!


EXCUSE ME--
-- BUT A DECISION...
...MUST BE MADE.
ONE OF US MUST LEAD. THE BEST WAY TO CHOOSE, I FEEL, IS A DUEL-- YOU AND I, CYCLOPS, ALONE IN THE DANGER ROOM.
UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU WOULD RATHER STEP ASIDE...?
NO.

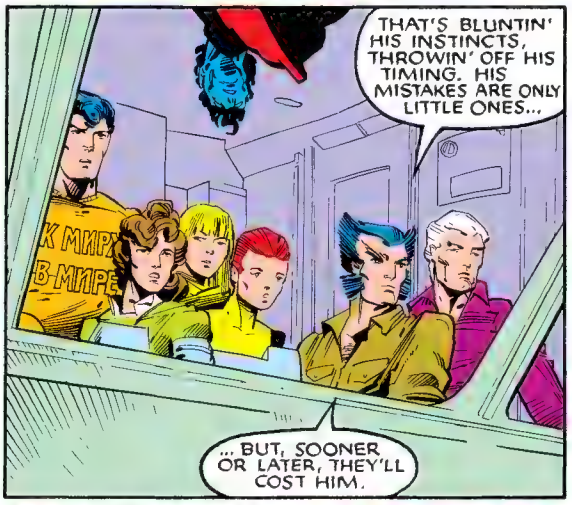

IN THE DANGER ROOM-- HEART OF A VAST COMPLEX BURIED BENEATH THE MANSION-- MAGNETO SHEPHERDS THE SCHOOL'S NOVICE GROUP, THE NEW MUTANTS, THROUGH A TRAINING SESSION.
EXCUSE ME, CYPHER--
--WOULD YOU AND THE OTHERS MIND TERMINATING YOUR SESSION?
STORM AND I NEED THE ROOM.
QUERY?
WHO KNOWS, WARLOCK.
AND WHO CARES?! THE X-MEN ARE THE SENIOR TEAM-- THEY CAN PULL RANK AND HOG THE FACILITIES WHENEVER THEY LIKE.
CYCLOPS WOULD NOT DO SO, SUNSPOT, WITHOUT GOOD REASON.
CYPHER, CAN YOU PROGRAM US AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT, PLEASE?
SURE, ORORO.
A SINGLE FALL, STORM, WINNER-TAKE-ALL? I'LL KEEP MY OPTIC BLASTS ON ULTRA LOW POWER.
AS YOU WISH.
A DUEL?!
DA, ILLYANA-- CYCLOPS VERSUS STORM!
THIS IS CRAZY!
HADDA HAPPEN.
MY MONEY'S ON THE LADY -- ANY TAKERS?

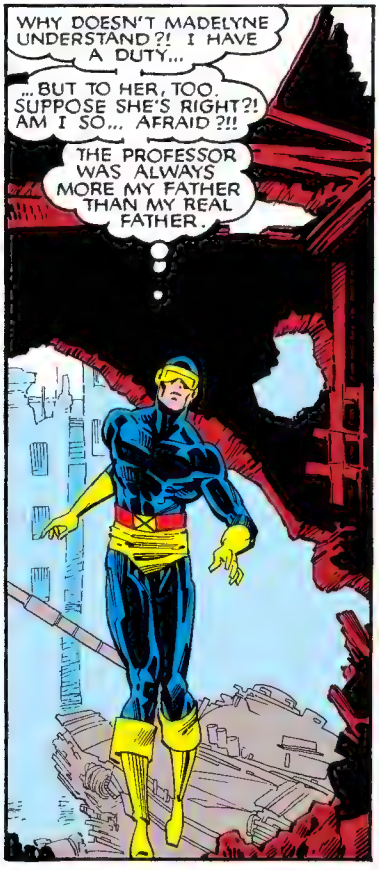

PROGRAM'S LOADED--
--AND RUNNING!
GOOD LORD! I KNOW THIS IS THE DANGER ROOM--THAT THIS SETTING IS A MIX OF ILLUSION AND REALITY, THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAMS AND PHYSICAL PROPS--
--BUT IT SEEMS SO... LIFELIKE!
THERE'S SIGHT, SOUND--EVEN SMELLS--THE DECEPTION IS PERFECT!
SPLENDID, DOUGLAS.
CYCLOPS'S OPTIC BLASTS ARE HIS ADVANTAGE. THIS ENVIRONMENT YOU CREATED IS MINE. WE ARE EVENLY MATCHED.
I'LL MAKE THIS SHORT AND SWEET, STORM...
ZARK
YOU ARE CERTAINLY WELCOME TO TRY, MY FRIEND.
RRUKT!
SHE'S SO FAST--!
AND AS AGILE AS A CAT! THE WAY SHE'S MOVING--USING EVERY SCRAP OF COVER--I CAN'T GET A DECENT SHOT!

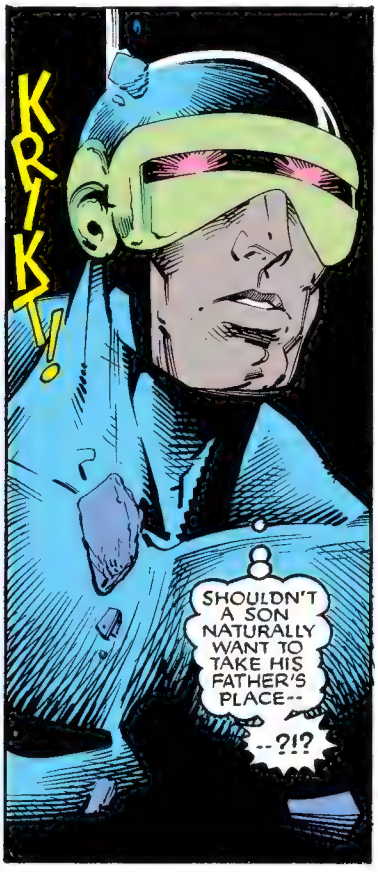
OKAY-- I'LL PUT MY-SELF IN HER SHOES, THINK LIKE SHE DOES, TRY TO FIGURE OUT HER NEXT MOVE.
SHE'S BLOCKING MY OPTIC BEAM WITH MY OWN ARM!
VRR AMP!
ZOT!


A GOOD AMBUSH...
...BUT CYCLOPS EASILY ESCAPED.
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN NAILED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

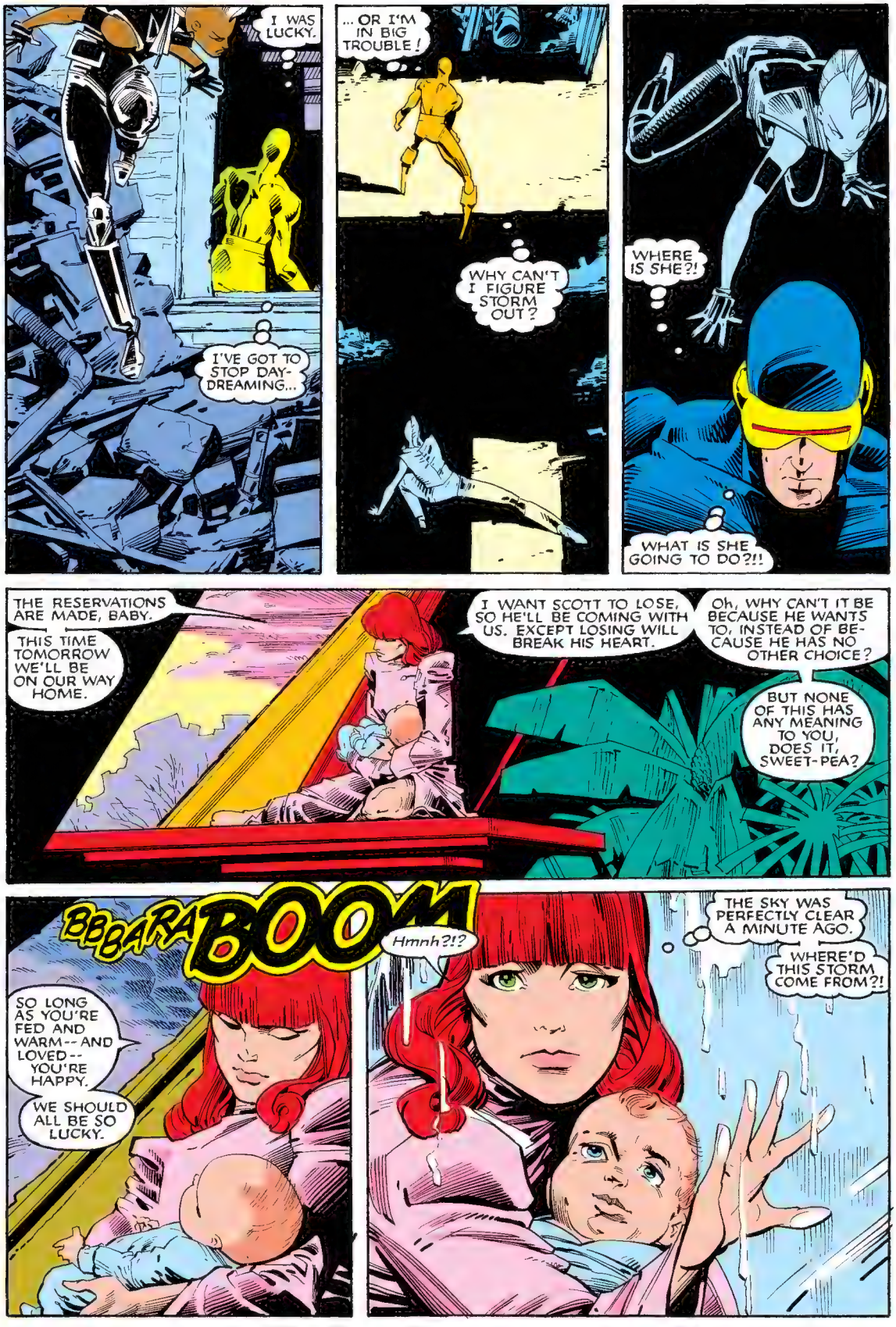
NO SECRET WHO YOU'RE ROOTING FOR.
ORORO CAN DO THE JOB. SCOTTY CAN'T-- NOT ANYMORE.
HIS HEAD MAY BE IN IT-- BUT NOT HIS HEART.


THAT'S BLUNTIN' HIS INSTINCTS, THROWIN' OFF HIS TIMING. HIS MISTAKES ARE ONLY LITTLE ONES...
...BUT, SOONER OR LATER, THEY'LL COST HIM.

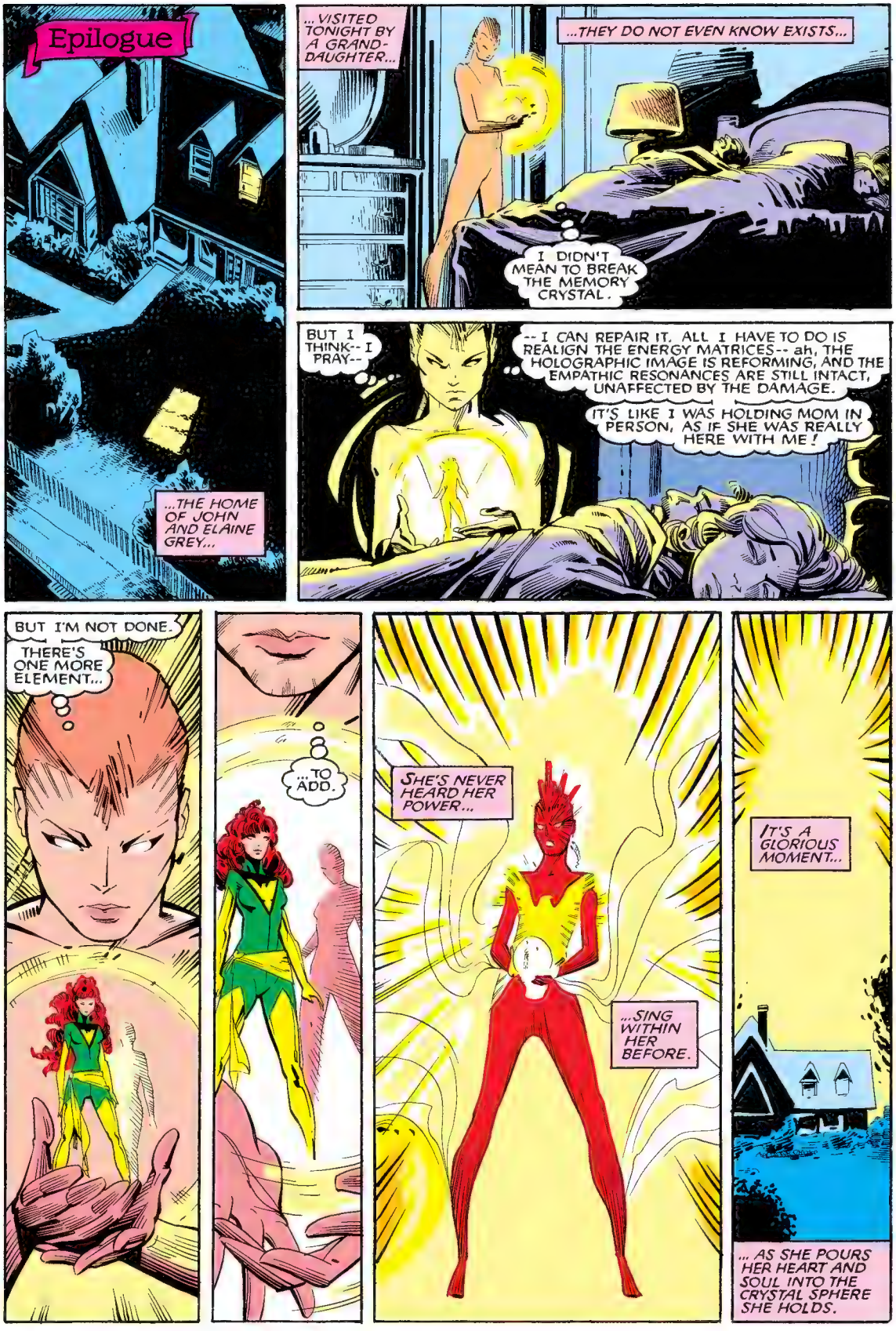

WHY DOESN'T MADELYNE UNDERSTAND?! I HAVE A DUTY...
...BUT TO HER, TOO. SUPPOSE SHE'S RIGHT?! AM I SO... AFRAID?!!
THE PROFESSOR WAS ALWAYS MORE MY FATHER THAN MY REAL FATHER.

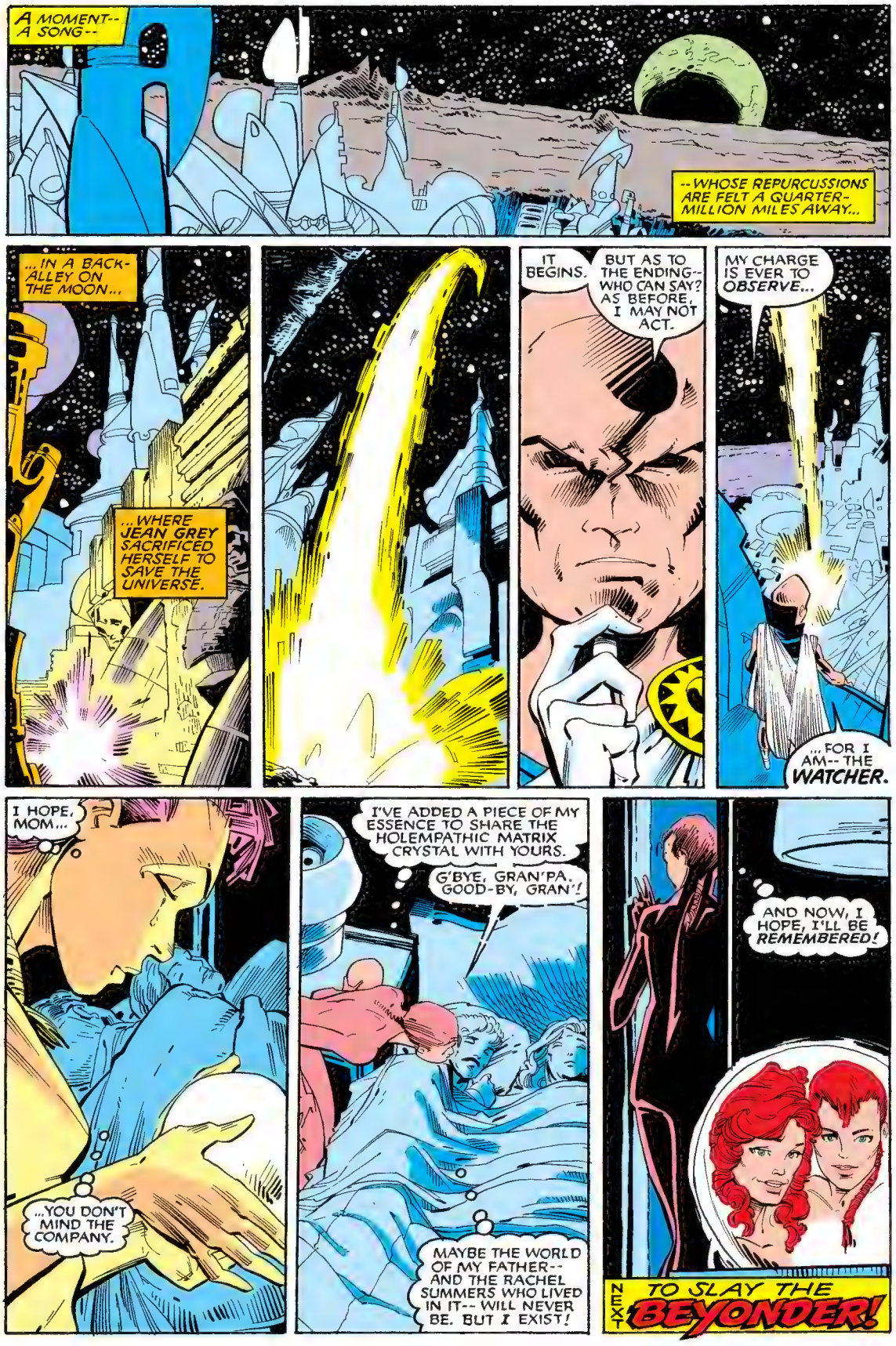

KRYKT!
SHOULDN'T A SON NATURALLY WANT TO TAKE HIS FATHER'S PLACE--
--?!?

SPZAK!


I WAS LUCKY.
I'VE GOT TO STOP DAY-DREAMING...
... OR I'M IN BIG TROUBLE!
WHY CAN'T I FIGURE STORM OUT?
WHERE IS SHE?!
WHAT IS SHE GOING TO DO?!!
THE RESERVATIONS ARE MADE, BABY.
THIS TIME TOMORROW WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY HOME.
I WANT SCOTT TO LOSE, SO HE'LL BE COMING WITH US. EXCEPT LOSING WILL BREAK HIS HEART.
Oh, WHY CAN'T IT BE BECAUSE HE WANTS TO, INSTEAD OF BECAUSE HE HAS NO OTHER CHOICE?
BUT NONE OF THIS HAS ANY MEANING TO YOU, DOES IT, SWEET-PEA?
BBBARA BOOM
SO LONG AS YOU'RE FED AND WARM--AND LOVED--YOU'RE HAPPY.
WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY.
Hmnh?!?
THE SKY WAS PERFECTLY CLEAR A MINUTE AGO.
WHERE'D THIS STORM COME FROM?!

SHE'S BEHIND ME--
--MISSED!
ZPAM!
MY VISOR!
GOT IT!
HAVE TO KEEP MY EYES CLOSED-- AND COVERED! THE RUBY QUARTZ LENS IN MY VISOR IS MY SOLE MEANS OF CONTROLLING MY OPTIC BLASTS! WITHOUT IT...
YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY HELPLESS, CYCLOPS-- YOU DARE NOT UNLEASH YOUR EYE-BEAMS WITHOUT RISKING KILLING EVERYONE AROUND YOU!
OUR DUEL IS OVER.
THE BEST X-MAN WON, STORM.
CONGRATULATIONS.
AND GOOD LUCK.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
I'M DREAMING! THIS ISN'T HAPPENING!
I LOST.
I DON'T LIKE IT-- BUT I'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT.
THERE'S NO MORE PLACE FOR ME HERE.
I WONDER, AFTER ALL I'VE SAID AND DONE, IF THERE'S ANY NOW WITH MADELYNE?


Epilogue
...THE HOME OF JOHN AND ELAINE GREY...
...VISITED TONIGHT BY A GRAND-DAUGHTER...
...THEY DO NOT EVEN KNOW EXISTS...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO BREAK THE MEMORY CRYSTAL.
BUT I THINK-- I PRAY--
-- I CAN REPAIR IT. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS REALIGN THE ENERGY MATRICES-- ah, THE HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE IS REFORMING, AND THE EMPATHIC RESONANCES ARE STILL INTACT, UNAFFECTED BY THE DAMAGE.
IT'S LIKE I WAS HOLDING MOM IN PERSON, AS IF SHE WAS REALLY HERE WITH ME!
BUT I'M NOT DONE.
THERE'S ONE MORE ELEMENT...
...TO ADD.
SHE'S NEVER HEARD HER POWER...
...SING WITHIN HER BEFORE.
IT'S A GLORIOUS MOMENT...
... AS SHE POURS HER HEART AND SOUL INTO THE CRYSTAL SPHERE SHE HOLDS.


A MOMENT-- A SONG--
--WHOSE REPURCUSSIONS ARE FELT A QUARTER-MILLION MILES AWAY...
...IN A BACK-ALLEY ON THE MOON...
...WHERE JEAN GREY SACRIFICED HERSELF TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE.
IT BEGINS.
BUT AS TO THE ENDING-- WHO CAN SAY? AS BEFORE, I MAY NOT ACT.
MY CHARGE IS EVER TO OBSERVE...
...FOR I AM-- THE WATCHER.
I HOPE, MOM...
...YOU DON'T MIND THE COMPANY.
I'VE ADDED A PIECE OF MY ESSENCE TO SHARE THE HOLEMPATHIC MATRIX CRYSTAL WITH YOURS.
G'BYE, GRAN'PA. GOOD-BY, GRAN'!
MAYBE THE WORLD OF MY FATHER-- AND THE RACHEL SUMMERS WHO LIVED IN IT-- WILL NEVER BE. BUT I EXIST!
AND NOW, I HOPE, I'LL BE REMEMBERED!
NEXT TO SLAY THE BEYONDER!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
SECRET WARS II
CONTINUES IN THIS ISSUE!
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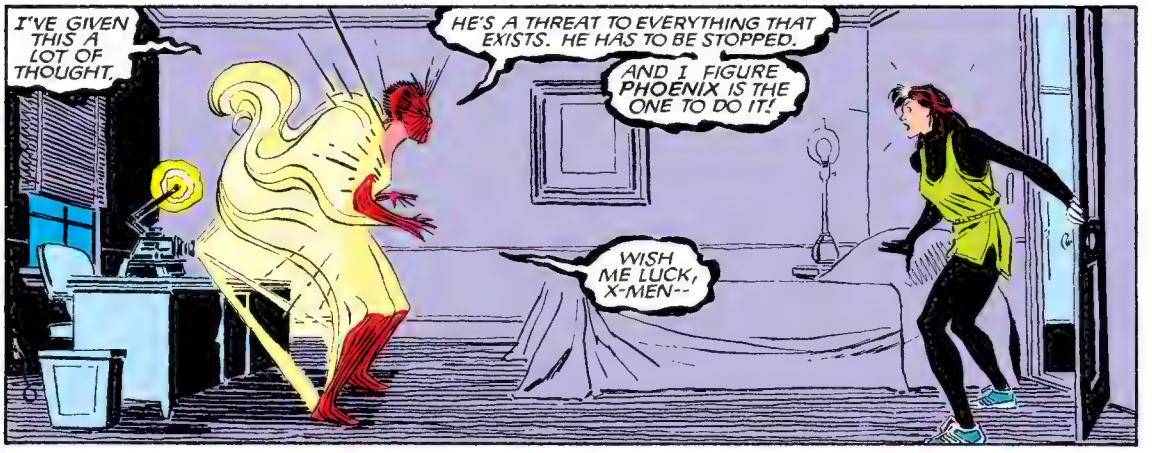
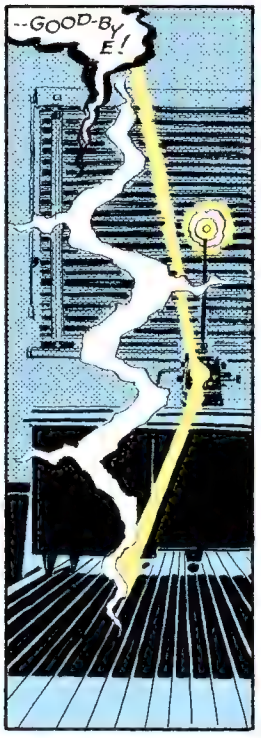
JR. JR. + AW.

X-MEN...
...I'VE GONE TO KILL--
--THE BEYONDER!
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT
WRITER
JOHN ROMITA, JR.
PENCILER
AL WILLIAMSON
GUEST INKER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI
LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

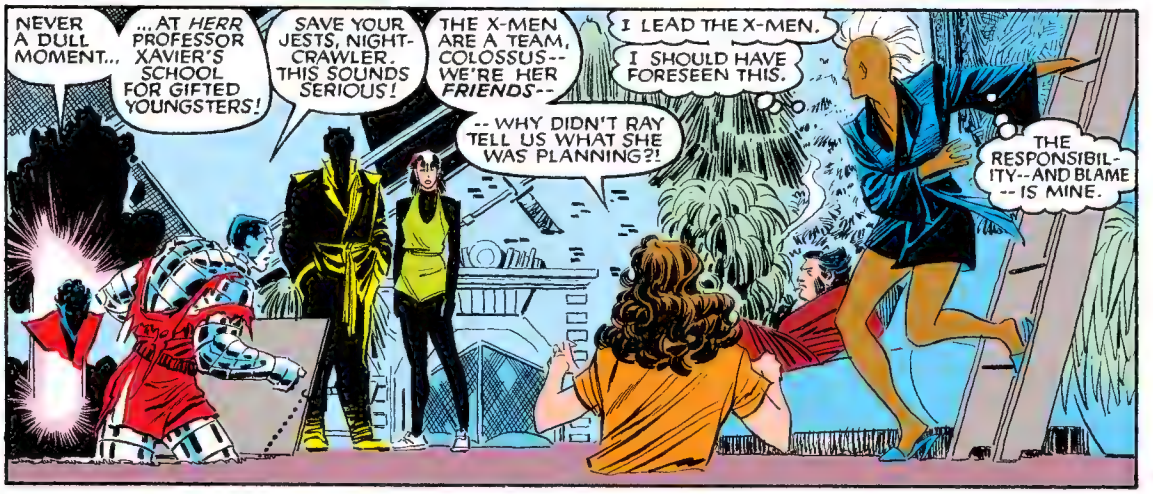

I'VE GIVEN THIS A LOT OF THOUGHT.
HE'S A THREAT TO EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS. HE HAS TO BE STOPPED.
AND I FIGURE PHOENIX IS THE ONE TO DO IT!
WISH ME LUCK, X-MEN--


--GOOD-BYE!

YOUR MOMMA WAS PHOENIX, RACHEL! WHAT YOU ARE--
--IS CRAZY!
STORM--!?!

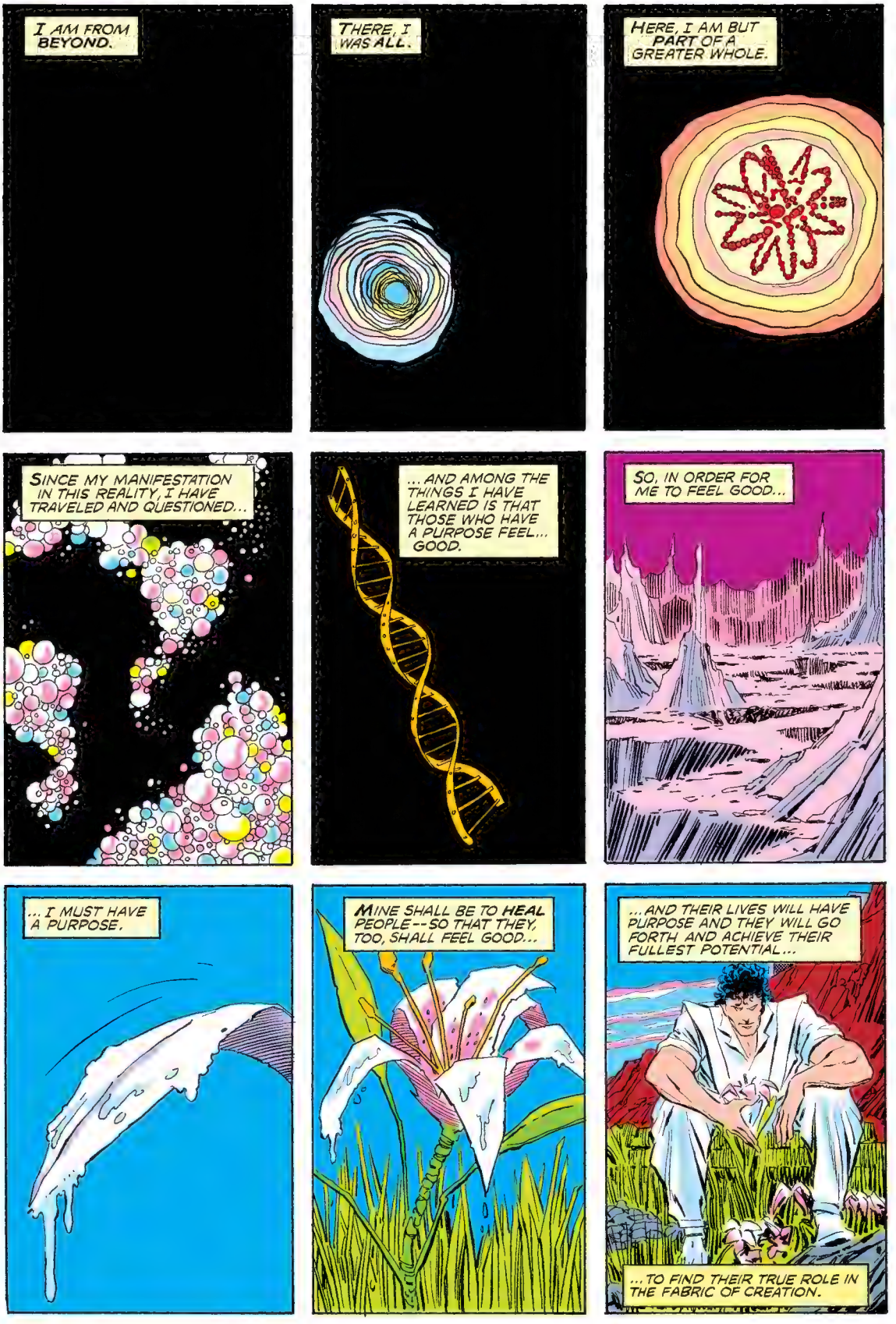
WE GOT BIG TROUBLE, BOSS!
IN RUSHED SENTENCES...

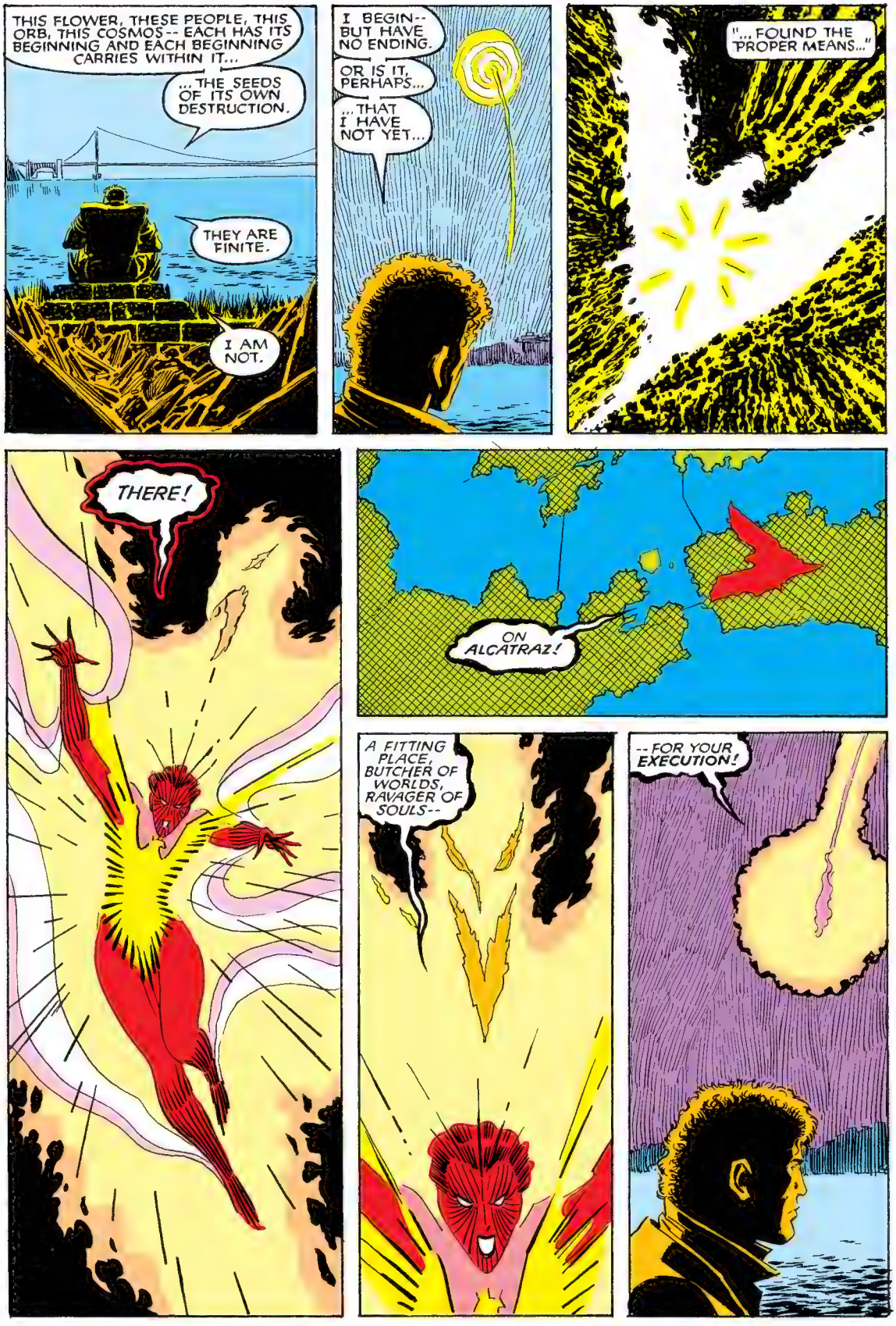
...ROGUE RELATES WHAT SHE DISCOVERED.
WAKE THE OTHERS--
--AND SUMMON THEM HERE TO MY LOFT!

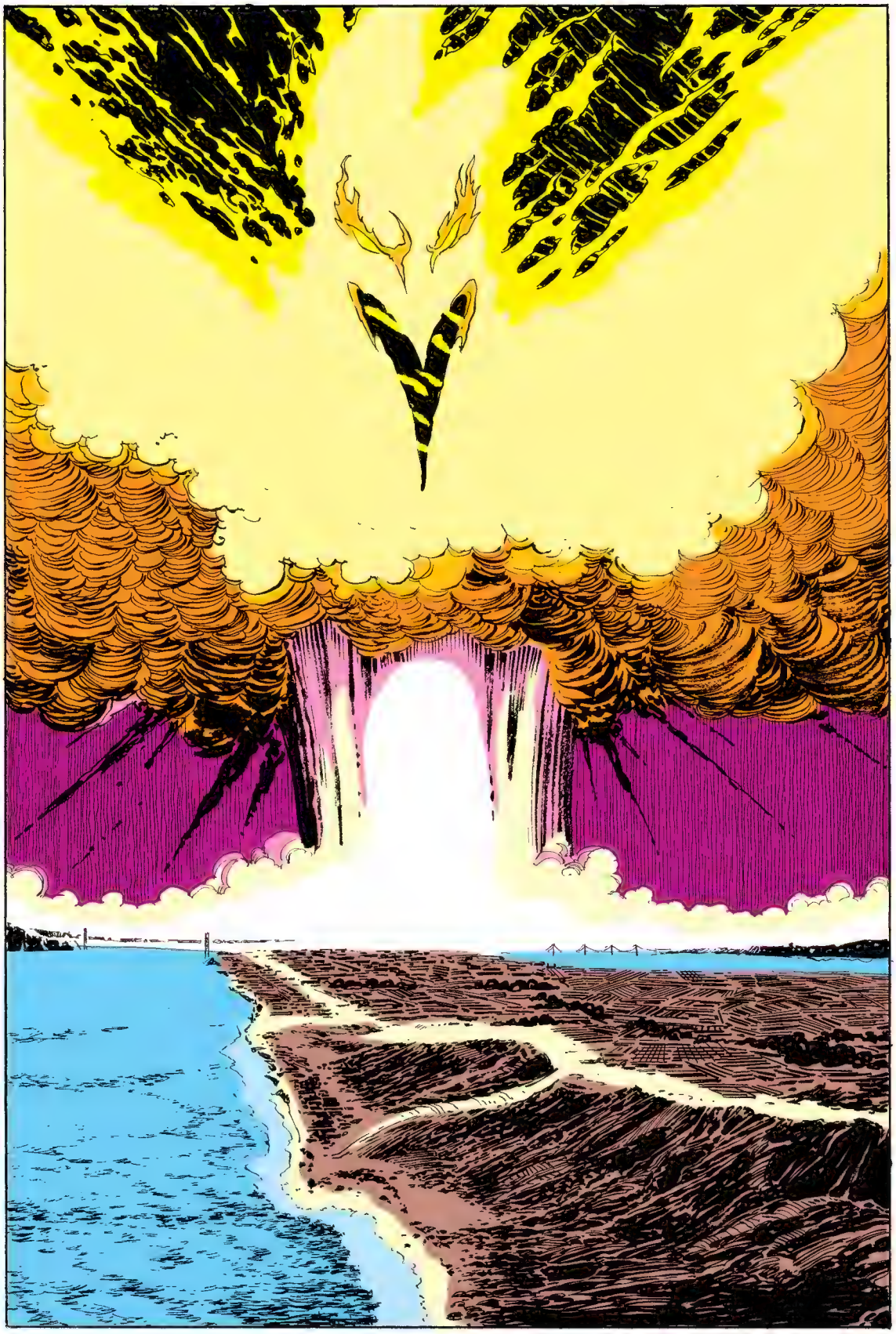

NEVER A DULL MOMENT...
...AT HERR PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS!
SAVE YOUR JESTS, NIGHT-CRAWLER. THIS SOUNDS SERIOUS!
THE X-MEN ARE A TEAM, COLOSSUS--WE'RE HER FRIENDS--
-- WHY DIDN'T RAY TELL US WHAT SHE WAS PLANNING?!
I LEAD THE X-MEN.
I SHOULD HAVE FORESEEN THIS.
THE RESPONSIBILITY--AND BLAME--IS MINE.

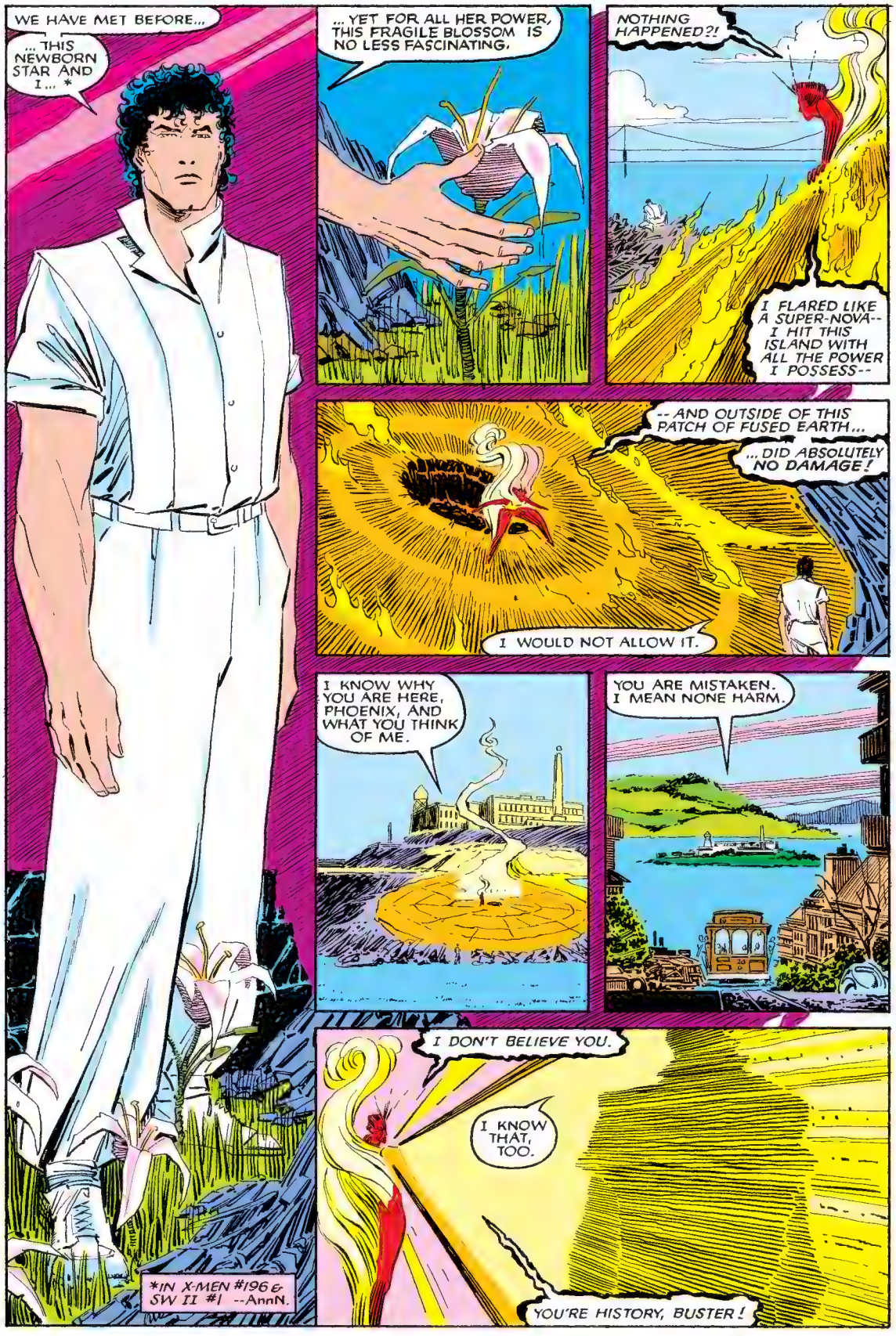
THE GIRL'S BED AIN'T BEEN SLEPT IN. SHE'S PROBABLY BEEN GONE FOR HOURS.
SHE RIGGED THE HOLO-PROJECTOR TO PLAY ITS MESSAGE WHEN THE DOOR OPENED.
WE KNOW THE SITUATION, GUYS...
...SO WHAT THE HECK DO WE DO ABOUT IT?!
WISH THE YOUNGSTER LUCK, LIKE SHE ASKED.
YEAH! THAT CREEP'S DONE NOTHING BUT HARM SINCE HE FIRST APPEARED.
HE'S PAST DUE FOR A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE!
MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I WON'T BE THERE WITH HER...
...FOR THE KILL.
SNIKT!
SHEATHE YOUR CLAWS, WOLVERINE!
REGARDLESS OF OUR FEELINGS, MY FRIENDS...
--WE MUST FIND RACHEL-- AND STOP THIS MAD QUEST--
--BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.
WHY BOTHER, STORM? WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED THE BEYONDER'S POWER. DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE...
...OUR YOUNG PHOENIX CAN HURT HIM, IN ANY WAY?!
PERHAPS NOT, NIGHTCRAWLER-- BUT SHE MIGHT MAKE HIM ANGRY.
AND SO, IN THE HEADMASTER'S STUDY THAT ONCE BELONGED TO THE SCHOOL'S -- AND X-MEN'S-- FOUNDER, CHARLES XAVIER, BUT IS NOW MAGNETO'S...
ASSUMING PHOENIX IS ALIVE, AND ON EARTH, CEREBRO SHOULD LOCATE HER.
THE SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO AMPLIFY ITS USER'S PSYCHIC ABILITIES, MAKING THEM EXCEPTIONALLY SENSITIVE TO THE UNIQUE MENTAL PATTERNS EXHIBITED BY MUTANT MINDS.
ONE MAJOR ADVANTAGE IS THAT WE SHALL BE SEEKING A SPECIFIC BRAIN TRACE. CEREBRO IS PROGRAMMED WITH RACHEL'S PATTERN, IT WILL IGNORE ALL OTHERS. UNFORTUNATELY, DESPITE THIS, THE FARTHER AWAY SHE IS, THE MORE DIFFICULT OUR TASK BECOMES.

WHOSE FAULT IS THAT, BUB?
GIZMO WORKED FINE TILL YOU MONKEYED WITH THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD, SO'S TO INHIBIT LONG-RANGE TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION.
'COURSE, BACK THEN, YOU WERE A BAD GUY, JUST TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS, MAKIN' SURE CHARLEY COULDN'T USE CEREBRO TO NAIL YOU.
KINDA ROUGH, AIN'T IT...
...BEIN' HOIST ON YOUR OWN PETARD?
TELL ME, WOLVERINE, ARE YOU ALWAYS SUCH AN ILL-MANNERED LOUT?
SUPPOSE I AM?
PERHAPS.
...IN MY OWN WAY, MY OWN TIME.
WANNA MAKE SOMETHING OF IT?!
CAREFUL, LOGAN. I KNOW THIS IS A TEST-- YOUR WAY OF TAKING MAGNETO'S MEASURE--
--BUT HE SOUNDS LIKE HE'S TAKING YOUR CHALLENGE SERIOUSLY! TO SURVIVE, WE HAVE TO TRUST EACH OTHER...
...NOT HATE EACH OTHER'S GUTS.
SINCE THIS INTERFERENCE OR WHATEVER IS YOUR CREATION, MAGNETO...
...CAN'T YOU FIX IT?
REGRETTABLY, ROGUE, NO.
STORM-- X-MEN-- I BELIEVE I HAVE SOME-THING!
BIP BIP BIP
THE PATTERN IS RACHEL'S-- SHE'S APPROACHING SAN FRANCISCO--
--BUT THE ENERGY READINGS ARE EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THEM.
I HAVE.
ORORO, HAVE WE BEEN WRONG ABOUT RACHEL ALL THIS TIME?!
MEIN GOTT-- COULD SHE TRULY BE HER MOTHER'S DAUGHTER...
...PHOENIX IN FACT, AS WELL AS NAME?!?

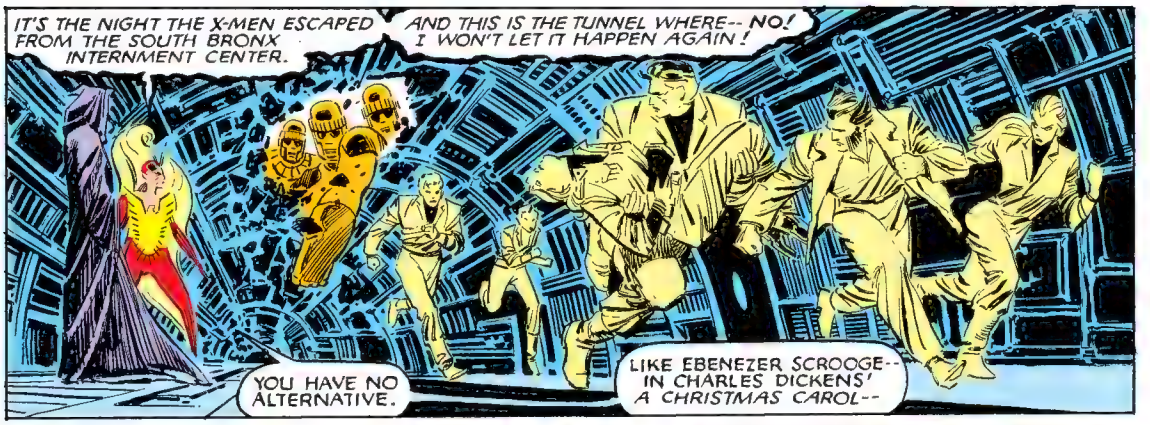

I AM FROM BEYOND.
THERE, I WAS ALL.
HERE, I AM BUT PART OF A GREATER WHOLE.
SINCE MY MANIFESTATION IN THIS REALITY, I HAVE TRAVELED AND QUESTIONED...
...AND AMONG THE THINGS I HAVE LEARNED IS THAT THOSE WHO HAVE A PURPOSE FEEL... GOOD.
SO, IN ORDER FOR ME TO FEEL GOOD...
...I MUST HAVE A PURPOSE.
MINE SHALL BE TO HEAL PEOPLE--SO THAT THEY, TOO, SHALL FEEL GOOD...
...AND THEIR LIVES WILL HAVE PURPOSE AND THEY WILL GO FORTH AND ACHIEVE THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL...
...TO FIND THEIR TRUE ROLE IN THE FABRIC OF CREATION.

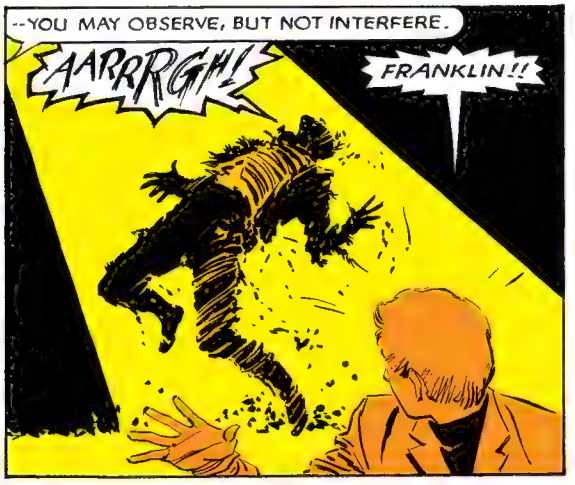

THIS FLOWER, THESE PEOPLE, THIS ORB, THIS COSMOS-- EACH HAS ITS BEGINNING AND EACH BEGINNING CARRIES WITHIN IT...
...THE SEEDS OF ITS OWN DESTRUCTION.
THEY ARE FINITE.
I AM NOT.
I BEGIN-- BUT HAVE NO ENDING.
OR IS IT, PERHAPS...
...THAT I HAVE NOT YET...
"...FOUND THE PROPER MEANS..."
THERE!
ON ALCATRAZ!
A FITTING PLACE, BUTCHER OF WORLDS, RAVAGER OF SOULS--
--FOR YOUR EXECUTION!



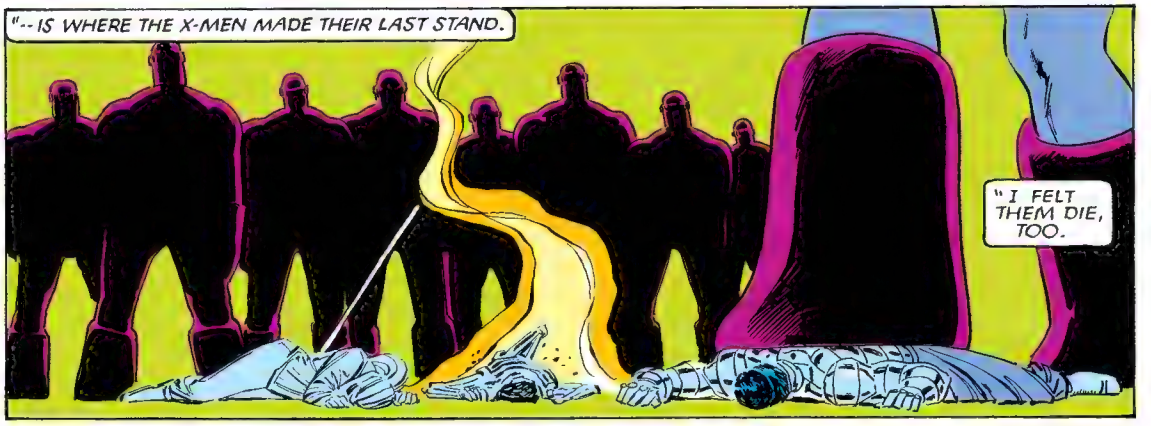

WE HAVE MET BEFORE...
... THIS NEWBORN STAR AND I... *
... YET FOR ALL HER POWER, THIS FRAGILE BLOSSOM IS NO LESS FASCINATING.
NOTHING HAPPENED?!
I FLARED LIKE A SUPER-NOVA-- I HIT THIS ISLAND WITH ALL THE POWER I POSSESS--
-- AND OUTSIDE OF THIS PATCH OF FUSED EARTH...
... DID ABSOLUTELY NO DAMAGE!
I WOULD NOT ALLOW IT.
I KNOW WHY YOU ARE HERE, PHOENIX, AND WHAT YOU THINK OF ME.
YOU ARE MISTAKEN. I MEAN NONE HARM.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
I KNOW THAT, TOO.
YOU'RE HISTORY, BUSTER!
*IN X-MEN #196 & SW II #1 --AnnN.

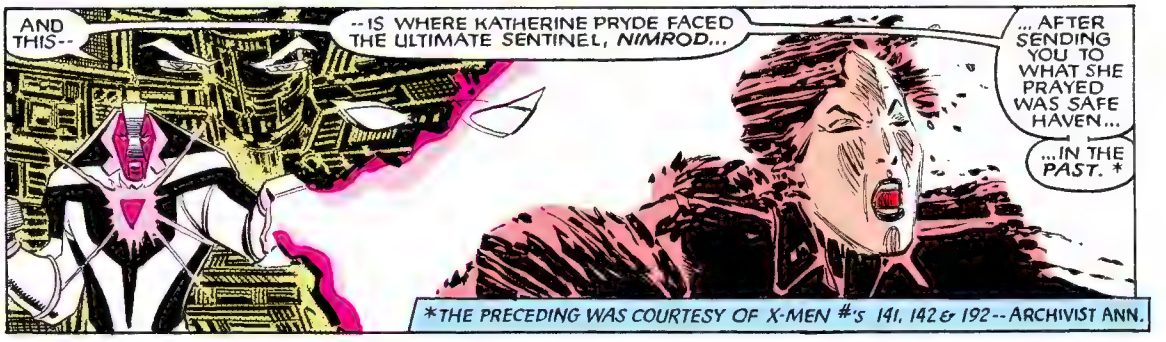
DOES THAT OUTBURST MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER?
ALIVE?!
IMPOSSIBLE!
NOT FOR ME.
I WON'T QUIT, MONSTER!
I'LL KEEP TRYING, I'LL KEEP ON COMING...
UNTIL YOU "GET" ME.
YOU COULD AS SOON DESTROY THE UNIVERSE.
SINCE MY MANIFESTATION IN YOUR REALITY, I HAVE STRIVEN TO UNDERSTAND...
...YET ALL OF THOSE I THOUGHT COULD TEACH ME COMPREHEND SO LITTLE THEMSELVES.
THEY PERCEIVE PIECES. I SEE THE WHOLE.
THEY ARE APART. I DESIRE UNITY.
IF LIFE IS SUCH A PAIN, CHUM...
...THERE'S A SIMPLE SOLUTION.
THE ONE YOU KNOW BEST. OF COURSE.
RAGE CONSUMES YOU. GRIEF EATS AWAY AT YOUR SOUL. BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE YOU FAILED THOSE YOU LOVED BEST.
WHY DID THEY DIE AND YOU SURVIVE?
FOR ALL YOUR POWER, YOU COULD NOT SAVE THEM.
THAT GUILT-- YOUR SECRET SHAME --KEEPS YOU FROM ACHIEVING THE POTENTIAL, AND DESTINY, THAT IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT.
WE'RE--
--IN NEW YORK!
THIS ISN'T ILLUSION-- IT'S REAL! IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, THE BEYONDER SHIFTED US, IN SPACE--
--AND TIME! WE'VE BEEN TRANSPORTED TO THE 21ST CENTURY --THE FUTURE ERA I CAME FROM, THE WORLD THAT'S YET TO BE-- AN AMERICA WHERE MUTANTS WERE HUNTED DOWN LIKE ANIMALS AND SLAUGHTERED ON SIGHT!

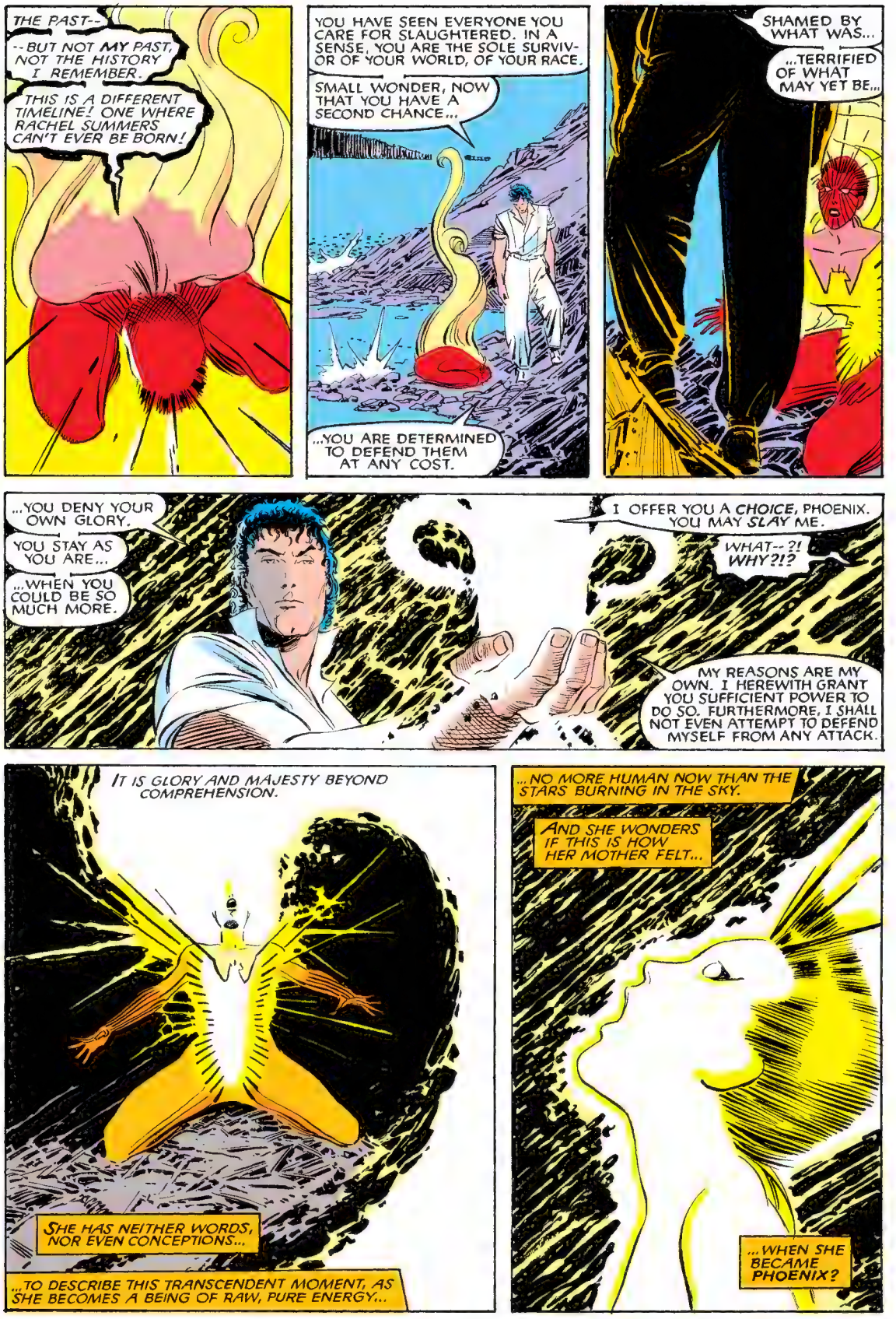

IT'S THE NIGHT THE X-MEN ESCAPED FROM THE SOUTH BRONX INTERNMENT CENTER.
AND THIS IS THE TUNNEL WHERE-- NO! I WON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!
YOU HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE.
LIKE EBENEZER SCROOGE-- IN CHARLES DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL--

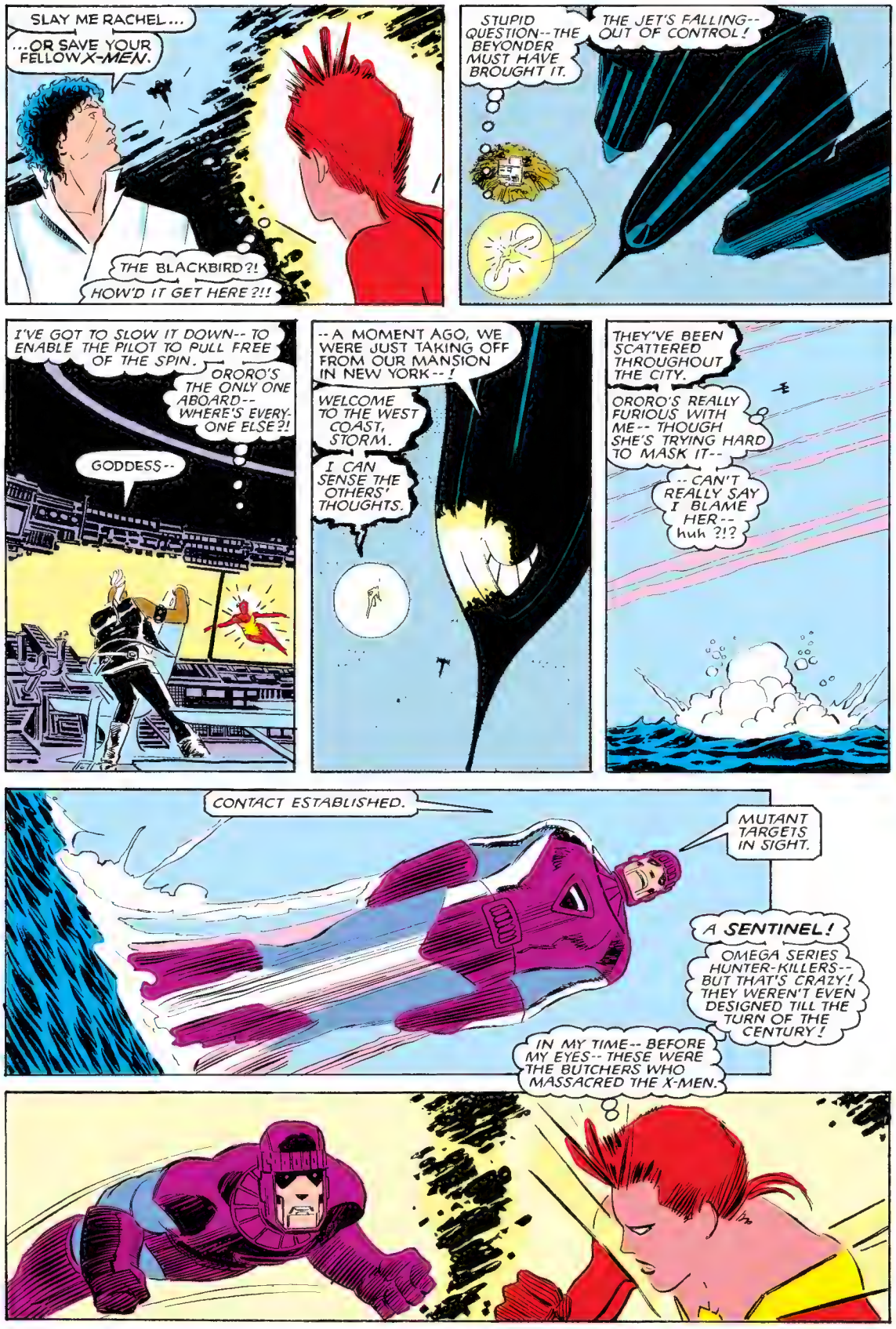

--YOU MAY OBSERVE, BUT NOT INTERFERE.
AARRRGH!
FRANKLIN!!

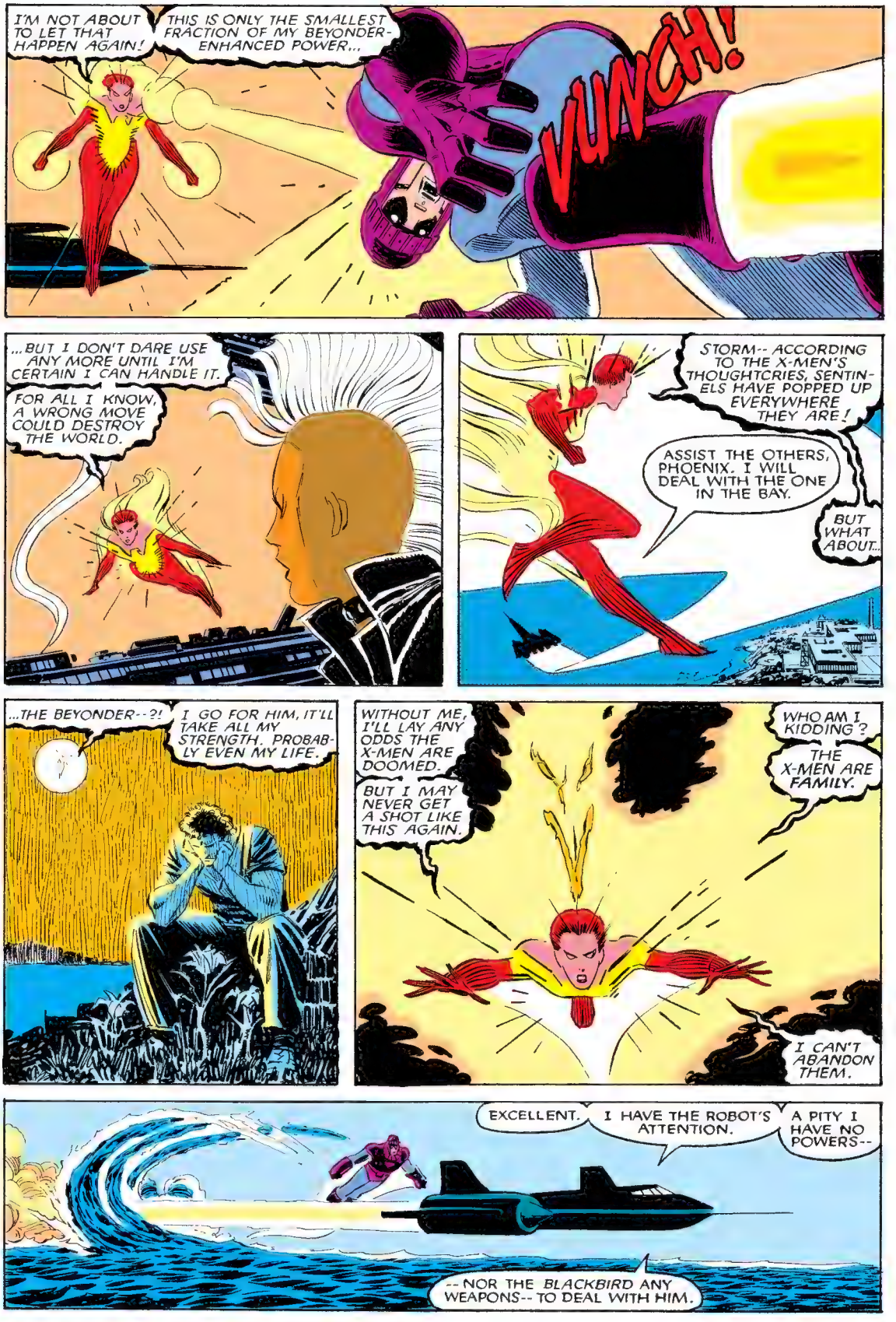
I... CARED FOR HIM.
I FELT HIS DEATH IN MY MIND. I STILL DO.
BAXTER
HERE-- THE BAXTER BUILDING, THE OLD HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR--

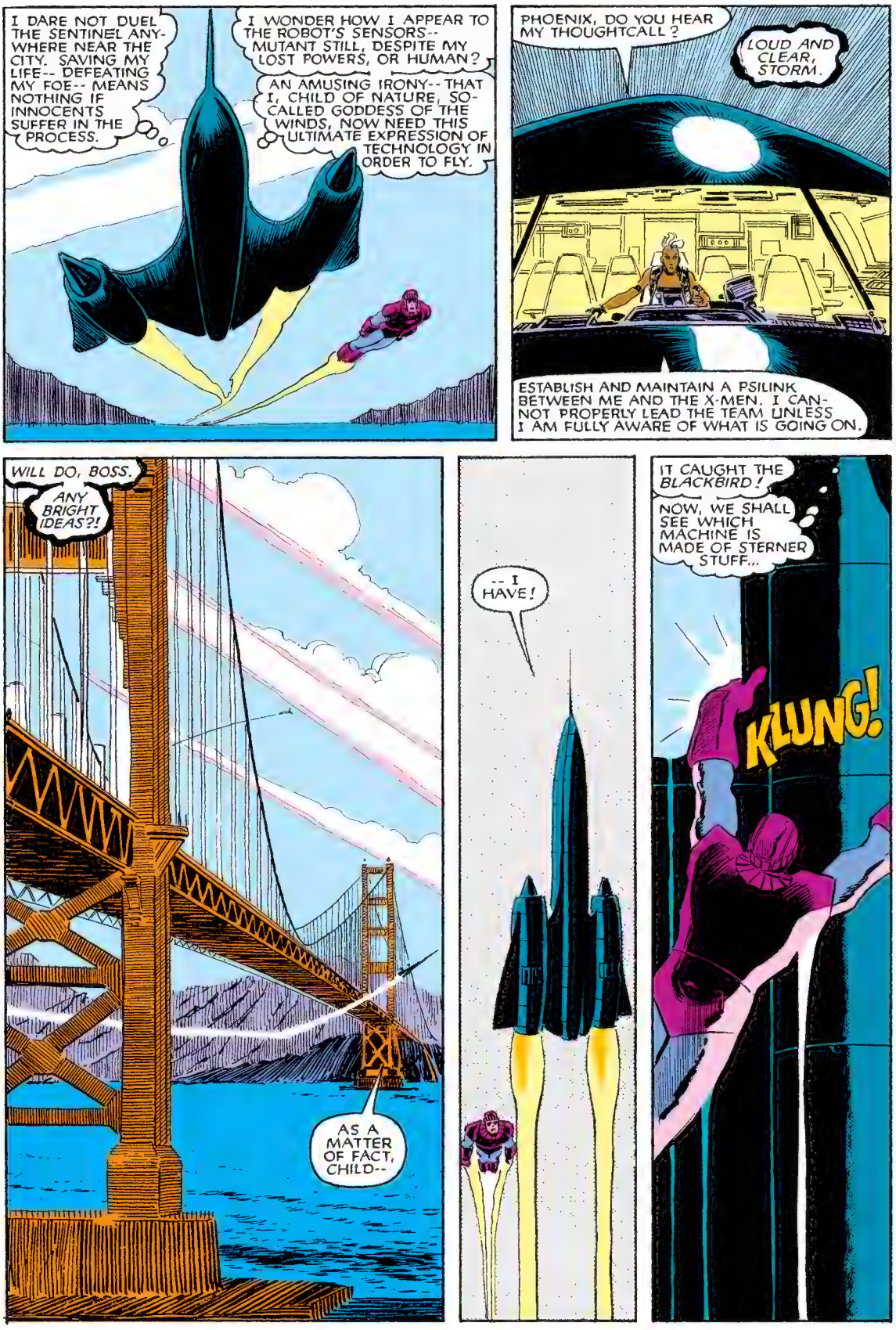

"-- IS WHERE THE X-MEN MADE THEIR LAST STAND.
"I FELT THEM DIE, TOO.

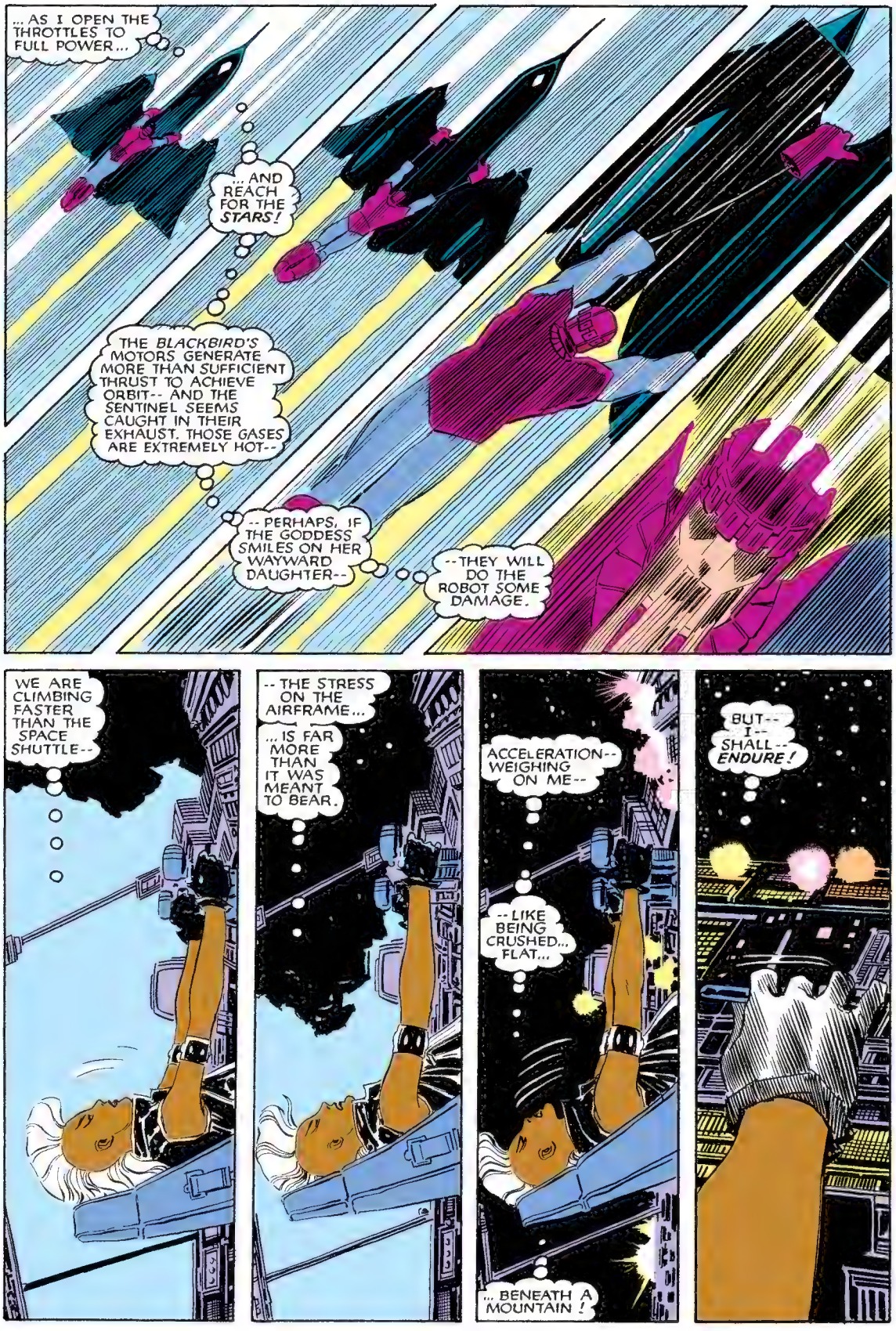

AND THIS--
--IS WHERE KATHERINE PRYDE FACED THE ULTIMATE SENTINEL, NIMROD...
...AFTER SENDING YOU TO WHAT SHE PRAYED WAS SAFE HAVEN...
...IN THE PAST. *
*THE PRECEDING WAS COURTESY OF X-MEN #'S 141, 142 & 192-- ARCHIVIST ANN.

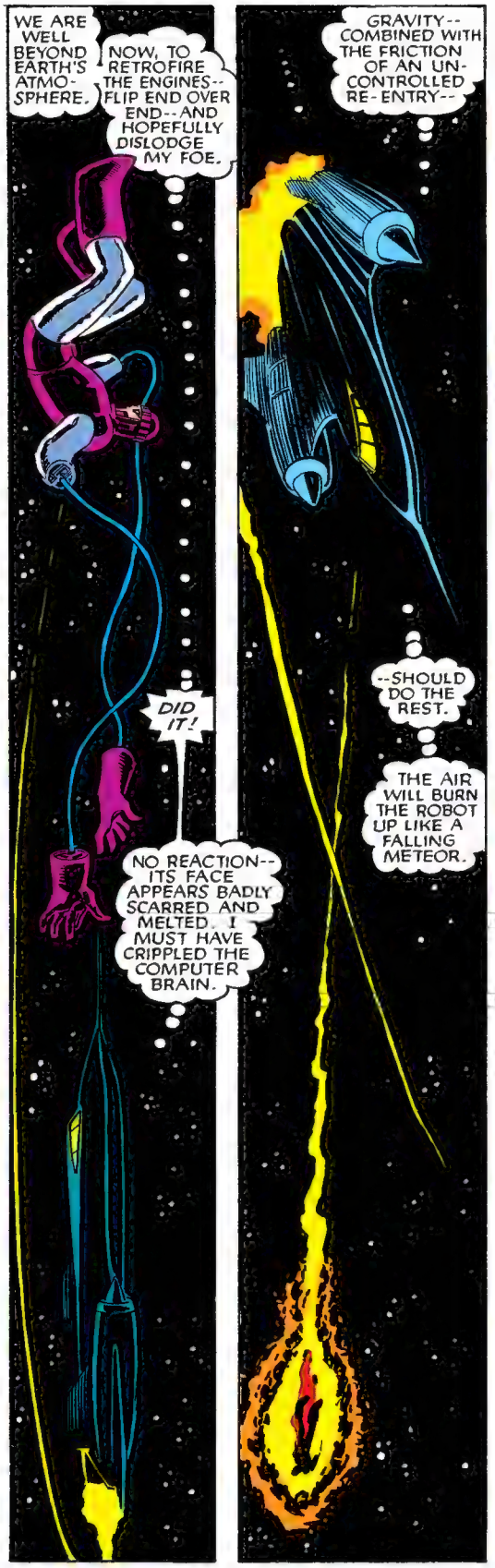

THE PAST--
--BUT NOT MY PAST, NOT THE HISTORY I REMEMBER.
THIS IS A DIFFERENT TIMELINE! ONE WHERE RACHEL SUMMERS CAN'T EVER BE BORN!
YOU HAVE SEEN EVERYONE YOU CARE FOR SLAUGHTERED. IN A SENSE, YOU ARE THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF YOUR WORLD, OF YOUR RACE.
SMALL WONDER, NOW THAT YOU HAVE A SECOND CHANCE...
...YOU ARE DETERMINED TO DEFEND THEM AT ANY COST.
SHAMED BY WHAT WAS...
...TERRIFIED OF WHAT MAY YET BE...
...YOU DENY YOUR OWN GLORY.
YOU STAY AS YOU ARE...
...WHEN YOU COULD BE SO MUCH MORE.
I OFFER YOU A CHOICE, PHOENIX. YOU MAY SLAY ME.
WHAT--?! WHY?!?
MY REASONS ARE MY OWN. I HEREWITH GRANT YOU SUFFICIENT POWER TO DO SO. FURTHERMORE, I SHALL NOT EVEN ATTEMPT TO DEFEND MYSELF FROM ANY ATTACK.
IT IS GLORY AND MAJESTY BEYOND COMPREHENSION.
SHE HAS NEITHER WORDS, NOR EVEN CONCEPTIONS...
...TO DESCRIBE THIS TRANSCENDENT MOMENT, AS SHE BECOMES A BEING OF RAW, PURE ENERGY...
...NO MORE HUMAN NOW THAN THE STARS BURNING IN THE SKY.
AND SHE WONDERS IF THIS IS HOW HER MOTHER FELT...
...WHEN SHE BECAME PHOENIX?

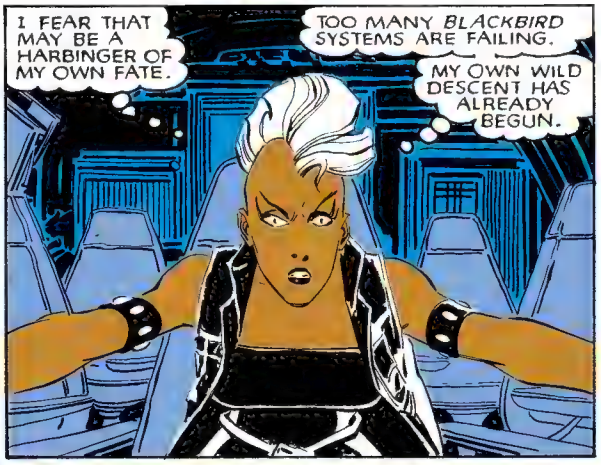

SLAY ME RACHEL...
...OR SAVE YOUR FELLOW X-MEN.
THE BLACKBIRD?!
HOW'D IT GET HERE?!!
STUPID QUESTION--THE BEYONDER MUST HAVE BROUGHT IT.
THE JET'S FALLING--OUT OF CONTROL!
I'VE GOT TO SLOW IT DOWN-- TO ENABLE THE PILOT TO PULL FREE OF THE SPIN.
ORORO'S THE ONLY ONE ABOARD-- WHERE'S EVERY-ONE ELSE?!
GODDESS--
--A MOMENT AGO, WE WERE JUST TAKING OFF FROM OUR MANSION IN NEW YORK--!
WELCOME TO THE WEST COAST, STORM.
I CAN SENSE THE OTHERS' THOUGHTS.
THEY'VE BEEN SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CITY.
ORORO'S REALLY FURIOUS WITH ME-- THOUGH SHE'S TRYING HARD TO MASK IT--
--CAN'T REALLY SAY I BLAME HER-- huh ?!?
CONTACT ESTABLISHED.
MUTANT TARGETS IN SIGHT.
A SENTINEL!
OMEGA SERIES HUNTER-KILLERS-- BUT THAT'S CRAZY! THEY WEREN'T EVEN DESIGNED TILL THE TURN OF THE CENTURY!
IN MY TIME-- BEFORE MY EYES-- THESE WERE THE BUTCHERS WHO MASSACRED THE X-MEN.

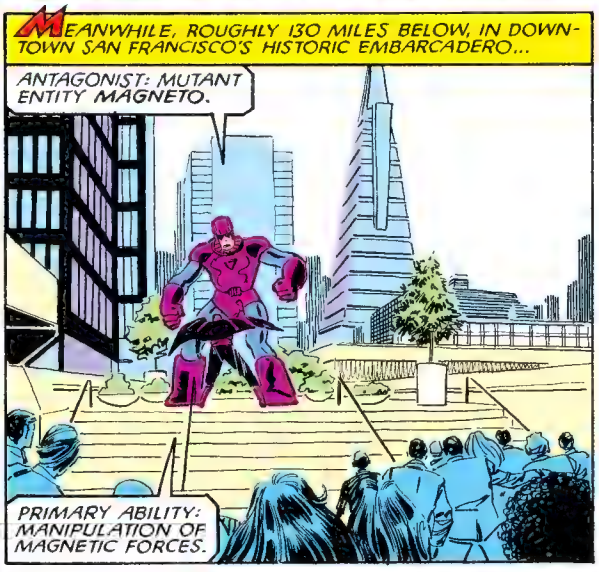

I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET THAT HAPPEN AGAIN!
THIS IS ONLY THE SMALLEST FRACTION OF MY BEYONDER-ENHANCED POWER...
VUNCH!
...BUT I DON'T DARE USE ANY MORE UNTIL I'M CERTAIN I CAN HANDLE IT.
FOR ALL I KNOW, A WRONG MOVE COULD DESTROY THE WORLD.
STORM-- ACCORDING TO THE X-MEN'S THOUGHTCRIES, SENTINELS HAVE POPPED UP EVERYWHERE THEY ARE!
ASSIST THE OTHERS, PHOENIX. I WILL DEAL WITH THE ONE IN THE BAY.
BUT WHAT ABOUT...
...THE BEYONDER--?!
I GO FOR HIM, IT'LL TAKE ALL MY STRENGTH. PROBABLY EVEN MY LIFE.
WITHOUT ME, I'LL LAY ANY ODDS THE X-MEN ARE DOOMED.
BUT I MAY NEVER GET A SHOT LIKE THIS AGAIN.
WHO AM I KIDDING? THE X-MEN ARE FAMILY.
I CAN'T ABANDON THEM.
EXCELLENT.
I HAVE THE ROBOT'S ATTENTION.
A PITY I HAVE NO POWERS--
--NOR THE BLACKBIRD ANY WEAPONS-- TO DEAL WITH HIM.

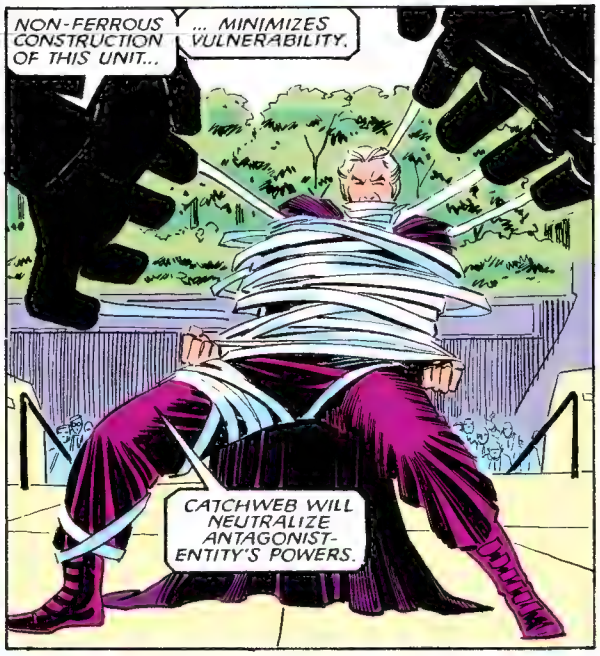

I DARE NOT DUEL THE SENTINEL ANYWHERE NEAR THE CITY. SAVING MY LIFE-- DEFEATING MY FOE-- MEANS NOTHING IF INNOCENTS SUFFER IN THE PROCESS.
I WONDER HOW I APPEAR TO THE ROBOT'S SENSORS-- MUTANT STILL, DESPITE MY LOST POWERS, OR HUMAN?
AN AMUSING IRONY-- THAT I, CHILD OF NATURE, SO-CALLED GODDESS OF THE WINDS, NOW NEED THIS ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER TO FLY.
PHOENIX, DO YOU HEAR MY THOUGHTCALL?
LOUD AND CLEAR, STORM.
ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A PSILINK BETWEEN ME AND THE X-MEN. I CANNOT PROPERLY LEAD THE TEAM UNLESS I AM FULLY AWARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON.
WILL DO, BOSS.
ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, CHILD--
-- I HAVE!
IT CAUGHT THE BLACKBIRD!
NOW, WE SHALL SEE WHICH MACHINE IS MADE OF STERNER STUFF...
KLUNG!

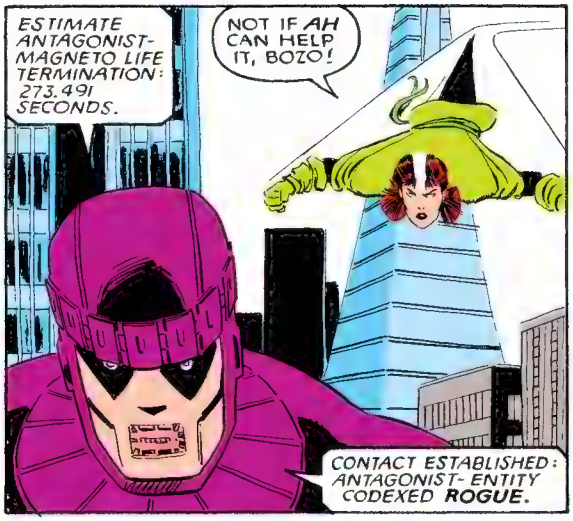

... AS I OPEN THE THROTTLES TO FULL POWER...
... AND REACH FOR THE STARS!
THE BLACKBIRD'S MOTORS GENERATE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT THRUST TO ACHIEVE ORBIT-- AND THE SENTINEL SEEMS CAUGHT IN THEIR EXHAUST. THOSE GASES ARE EXTREMELY HOT--
-- PERHAPS, IF THE GODDESS SMILES ON HER WAYWARD DAUGHTER--
--THEY WILL DO THE ROBOT SOME DAMAGE.
WE ARE CLIMBING FASTER THAN THE SPACE SHUTTLE--
-- THE STRESS ON THE AIRFRAME...
... IS FAR MORE THAN IT WAS MEANT TO BEAR.
ACCELERATION-- WEIGHING ON ME--
-- LIKE BEING CRUSHED... FLAT...
... BENEATH A MOUNTAIN!
BUT-- I-- SHALL-- ENDURE!

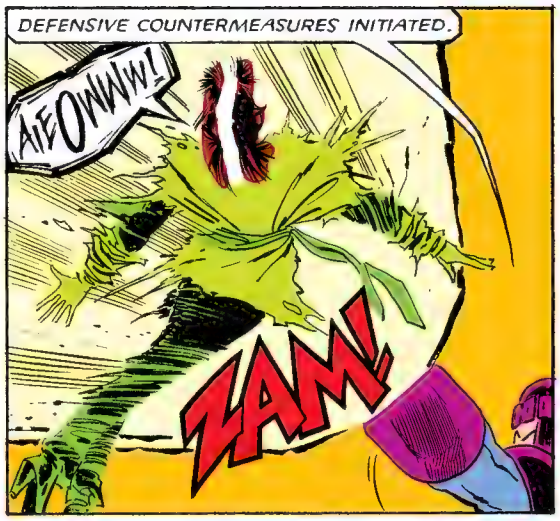

WE ARE WELL BEYOND EARTH'S ATMO-SPHERE.
NOW, TO RETROFIRE THE ENGINES--FLIP END OVER END--AND HOPEFULLY DISLODGE MY FOE.
DID IT!
NO REACTION--ITS FACE APPEARS BADLY SCARRED AND MELTED. I MUST HAVE CRIPPLED THE COMPUTER BRAIN.
GRAVITY--COMBINED WITH THE FRICTION OF AN UN-CONTROLLED RE-ENTRY--
--SHOULD DO THE REST.
THE AIR WILL BURN THE ROBOT UP LIKE A FALLING METEOR.


I FEAR THAT MAY BE A HARBINGER OF MY OWN FATE.
TOO MANY BLACKBIRD SYSTEMS ARE FAILING.
MY OWN WILD DESCENT HAS ALREADY BEGUN.


MEANWHILE, ROUGHLY 130 MILES BELOW, IN DOWN-TOWN SAN FRANCISCO'S HISTORIC EMBARCADERO...
ANTAGONIST: MUTANT ENTITY MAGNETO.
PRIMARY ABILITY: MANIPULATION OF MAGNETIC FORCES.


NON-FERROUS CONSTRUCTION OF THIS UNIT...
... MINIMIZES VULNERABILITY.
CATCHWEB WILL NEUTRALIZE ANTAGONIST-ENTITY'S POWERS.


ESTIMATE ANTAGONIST-MAGNETO LIFE TERMINATION: 273.491 SECONDS.
NOT IF AH CAN HELP IT, BOZO!
CONTACT ESTABLISHED: ANTAGONIST- ENTITY CODEXED ROGUE.

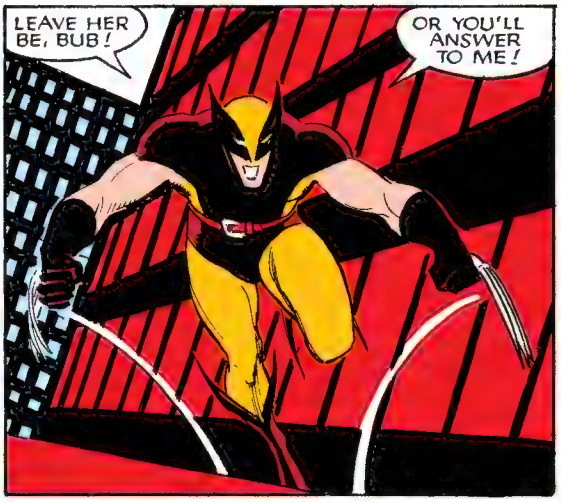

DEFENSIVE COUNTERMEASURES INITIATED.
AIEOWWW!
ZAM!

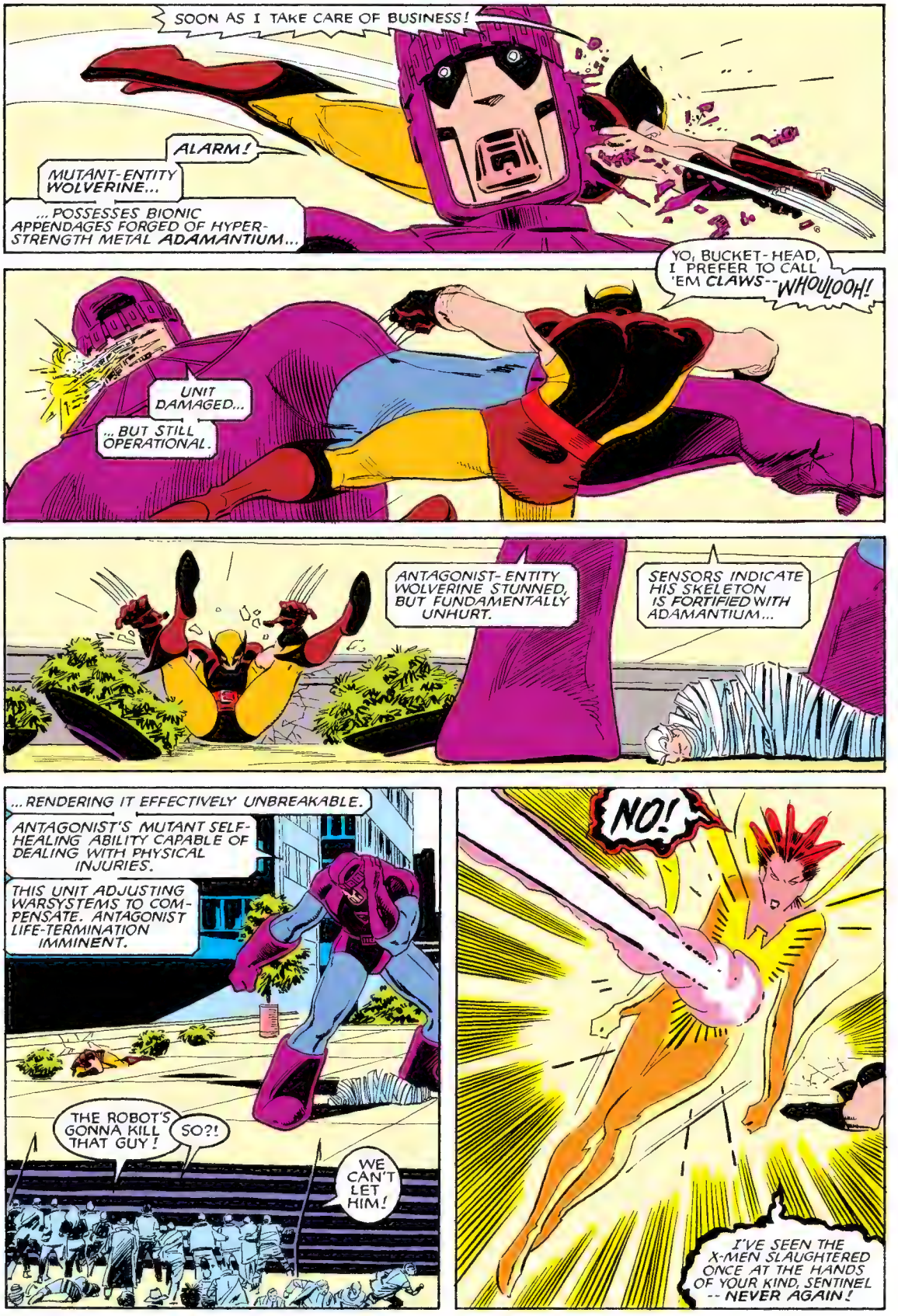
THE WICKED BACKLASH SENDS ROGUE REELING ACROSS THE PLAZA, THROUGH LITERALLY SCORES OF UNSUSPECTING COMMUTERS EMERGING FROM THE EMBARCADERO MUNI STATION...

...WITH, FOR ROGUE, DISASTEROUS RESULTS.
MY COSTUME-- IN SHREDS!
ALL THESE PEOPLE-- AH TOUCHED 'EM--
--AH'M ABSORBIN' THEIR THOUGHTS...

... EMOTIONS... MEMORIES... PERSONALITIES!
AH CAN'T HELP IT-- SO MANY OF 'EM-- SCARED-- ANGRY-- AH'M SORRY, AH DIDN'T MEAN-- THEY'RE INSIDE MY HEAD...

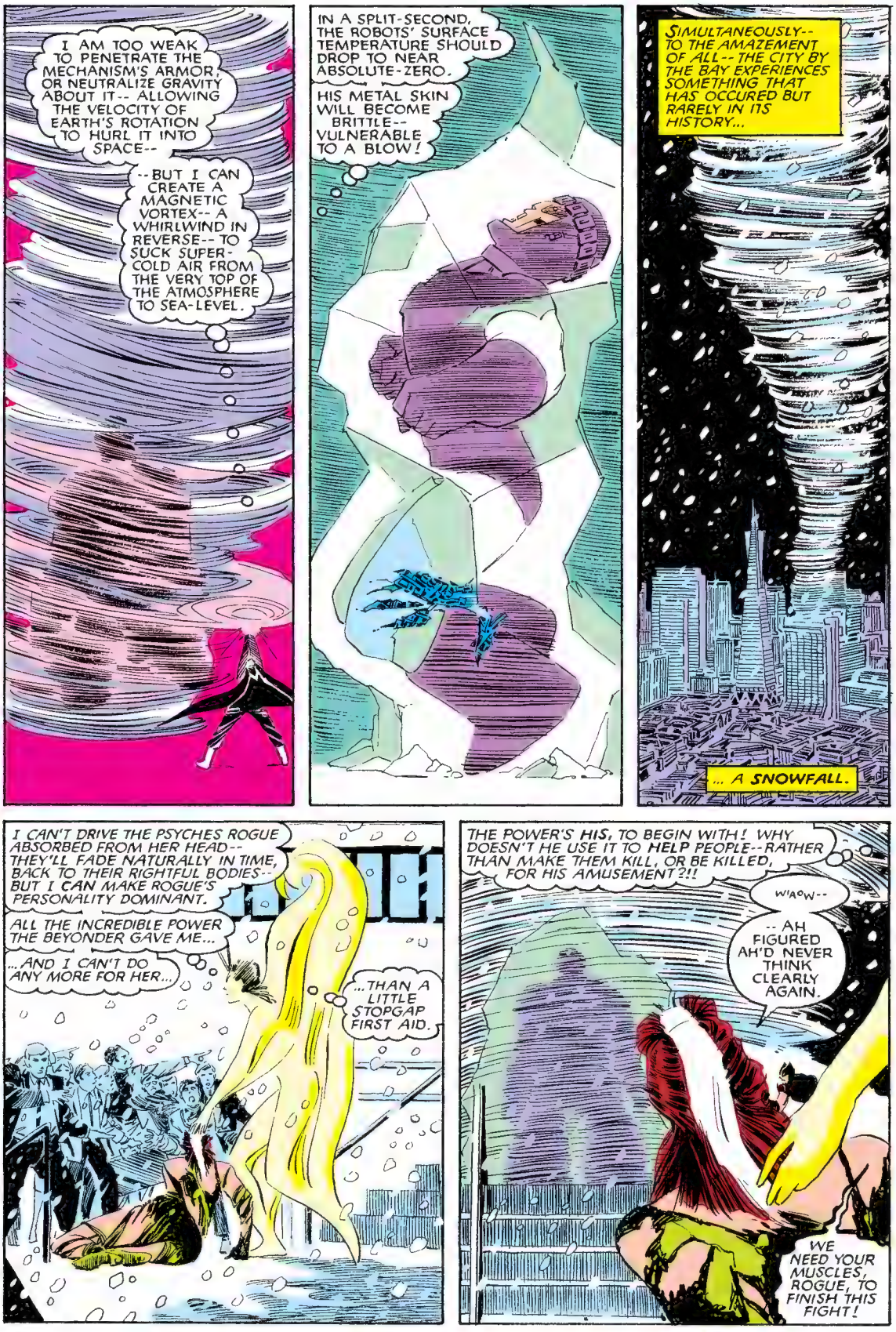
... NOTHING LEFT OF MY OWN SELF...
...OF ME!
WHAT--?!
...LUCAS FILMING A MOVIE...
... PUBLICITY STUNT...
THE WOMAN-- STRUCK THE CROWD...
... THEY DIED!
NO, THEY'RE ONLY STUNNED!
SHE MURDERED THEM!
SHE'S A MUTIE!
GET HER!

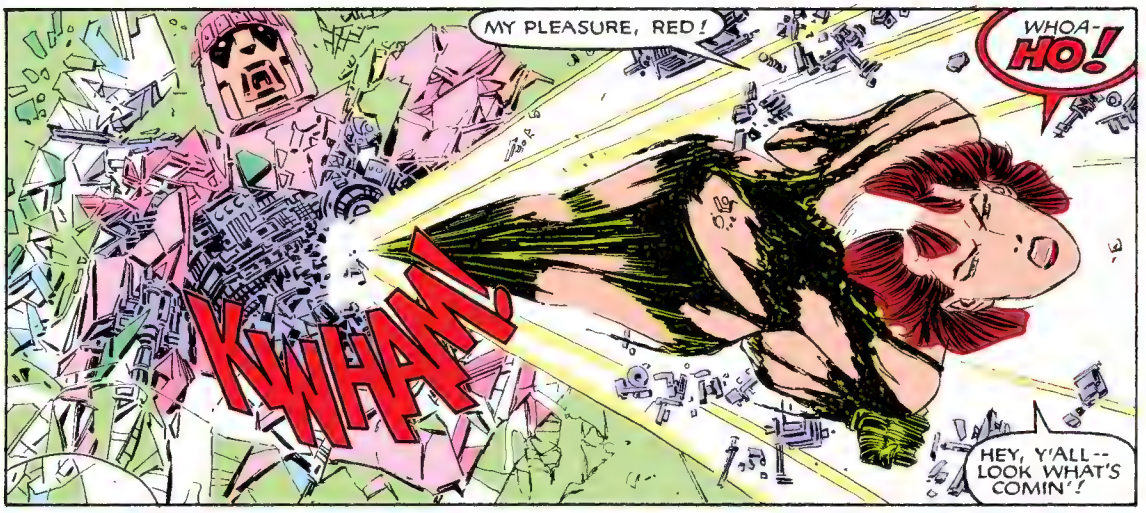

LEAVE HER BE, BUB!
OR YOU'LL ANSWER TO ME!

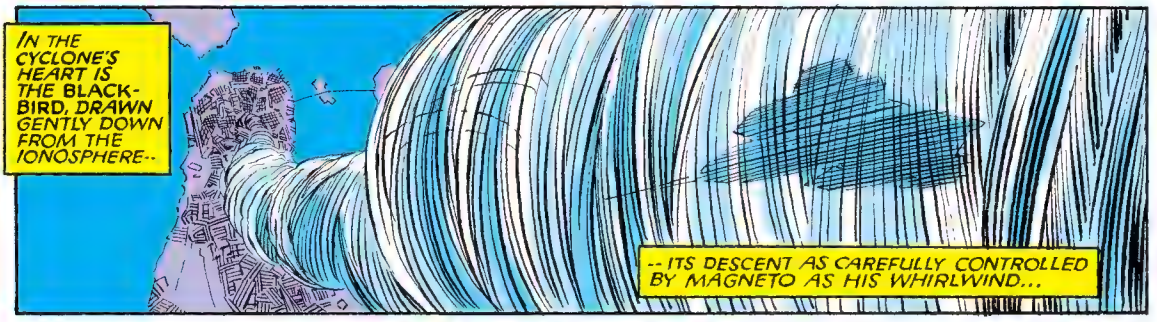

SOON AS I TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS!
ALARM!
MUTANT-ENTITY WOLVERINE...
...POSSESSES BIONIC APPENDAGES FORGED OF HYPER-STRENGTH METAL ADAMANTIUM...
YO, BUCKET-HEAD, I PREFER TO CALL 'EM CLAWS--WHOOOOH!
UNIT DAMAGED...
...BUT STILL OPERATIONAL.
ANTAGONIST-ENTITY WOLVERINE STUNNED, BUT FUNDAMENTALLY UNHURT.
SENSORS INDICATE HIS SKELETON IS FORTIFIED WITH ADAMANTIUM...
...RENDERING IT EFFECTIVELY UNBREAKABLE.
ANTAGONIST'S MUTANT SELF-HEALING ABILITY CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH PHYSICAL INJURIES.
THIS UNIT ADJUSTING WARSYSTEMS TO COMPENSATE. ANTAGONIST LIFE-TERMINATION IMMINENT.
THE ROBOT'S GONNA KILL THAT GUY!
SO?!
WE CAN'T LET HIM!
NO!
I'VE SEEN THE X-MEN SLAUGHTERED ONCE AT THE HANDS OF YOUR KIND, SENTINEL -- NEVER AGAIN!

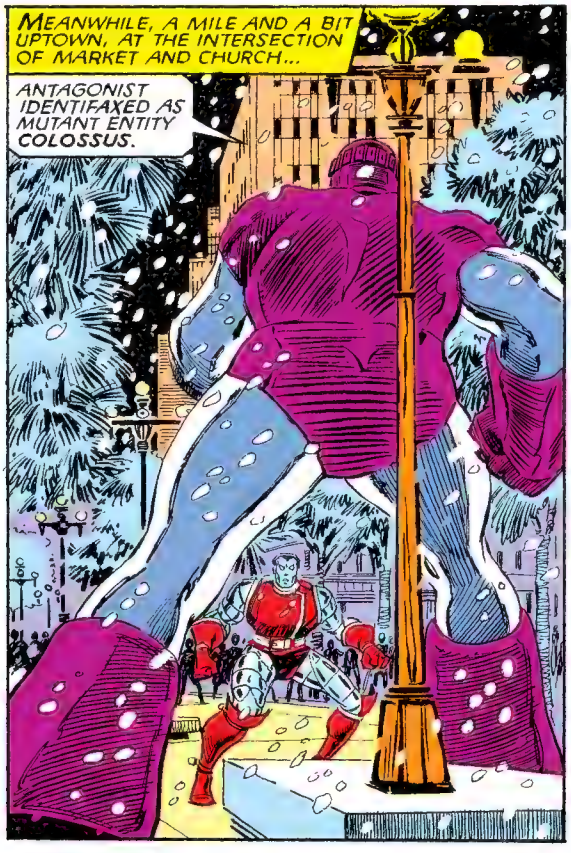
A TELE-KINETIC SHIELD WILL COVER MY BACK...
... WHILE I TEND TO WOLVERINE!
NEW TARGET-- IDENTISCAN REGISTERS UNKNOWN MUTANT-ENTITY. COMBAT ANALYSIS INITIATED.
ENTITY IS HIGH-ORDER TELEPATH/TELEKINETIC-- RADIATING ENERGY LEVELS FAR IN EXCESS OF ANY PREVIOUSLY CHARTED.
BEGINNING INTERNAL SYSTEMS MODIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECT ANTAGONIST-TERMINATION. TRANSITION TIME REQUIRED: 107.11 SECONDS.
AND THERE I THOUGHT THE BEYONDER'S POWER WOULD MAKE ME INVULNERABLE.
I'VE NO IDEA WHAT WEAPON THAT TIN HORROR'LL COME UP WITH-- AND I DON'T WANT TO FIND OUT.
BY INFUSING WOLVERINE WITH A FRACTION OF MY OWN ESSENCE...
... I'LL IN EFFECT SUPER-CHARGE HIS HEALING FACTOR.
Whua--?!?
THAT'LL MAKE HIS RECOVERY VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS.
BLAST! MY SHIELD'S HOLDING--
--BUT THAT LAST SHOT RICOCHETED...
... AND TORE A BIG CHUNK OUT OF THE FREEWAY OVERHEAD!
WOLVERINE-- CUT MAGNETO LOOSE!
MY... THANKS, X-MEN.
MAGNETO-- WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES IN TROUBLE! OTHER X-MEN ARE FIGHTING A SENTINEL UPTOWN IN THE CASTRO DISTRICT, AND STORM--!
YOUR... PSIONIC PROJECTIONS PROVIDE A MOST... GRAPHIC PICTURE OF HER PLIGHT, PHOENIX.
BUT BEFORE WE DO ANYTHING, WE MUST REMOVE THE LOCAL CITIZENRY FROM HARM'S WAY.

YOU ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT ORDINARY PEOPLE, MAGNETO?
THAT IS A CHANGE OF HEART.
GIVE THE MAN A BREAK, WOLVIE, WILLYA?!
FOR BETTER OR WORSE, MY FRIEND, I AM AN X-MAN. AND WILL PLAY BY YOUR RULES.
LISTEN UP, EVERYONE! PLEASE CLEAR THE AREA! DON'T PANIC--BUT DON'T DELAY AND DON'T HANG AROUND.
THE ROBOT IS DANGEROUS!
NO FOOLIN'!
THIS IS CRAZY! I HEAR A LADY'S VOICE INSIDE MY HEAD!
ME, TOO!
MAKES SENSE, WHAT SHE'S SAYIN'!
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!!
THE CIVILIANS ARE SAFE.
MY NEXT MOVE IS TO DISTRACT THE SENTINEL--BLIND ITS SENSORS--
--SO WOLVERINE CAN GET IN CLOSE--
--AND DO WHAT HE DOES BEST!
TIMBER!
SLASH!
BUT WITH HIS SELF-REPAIR SYSTEMS, HE WON'T BE DOWN LONG.
A FEW SECONDS WILL BE SUFFICIENT.
DON'T FORGET STORM!
I HAVE NOT, PHOENIX, TRUST ME.
I'LL GET ROGUE READY!

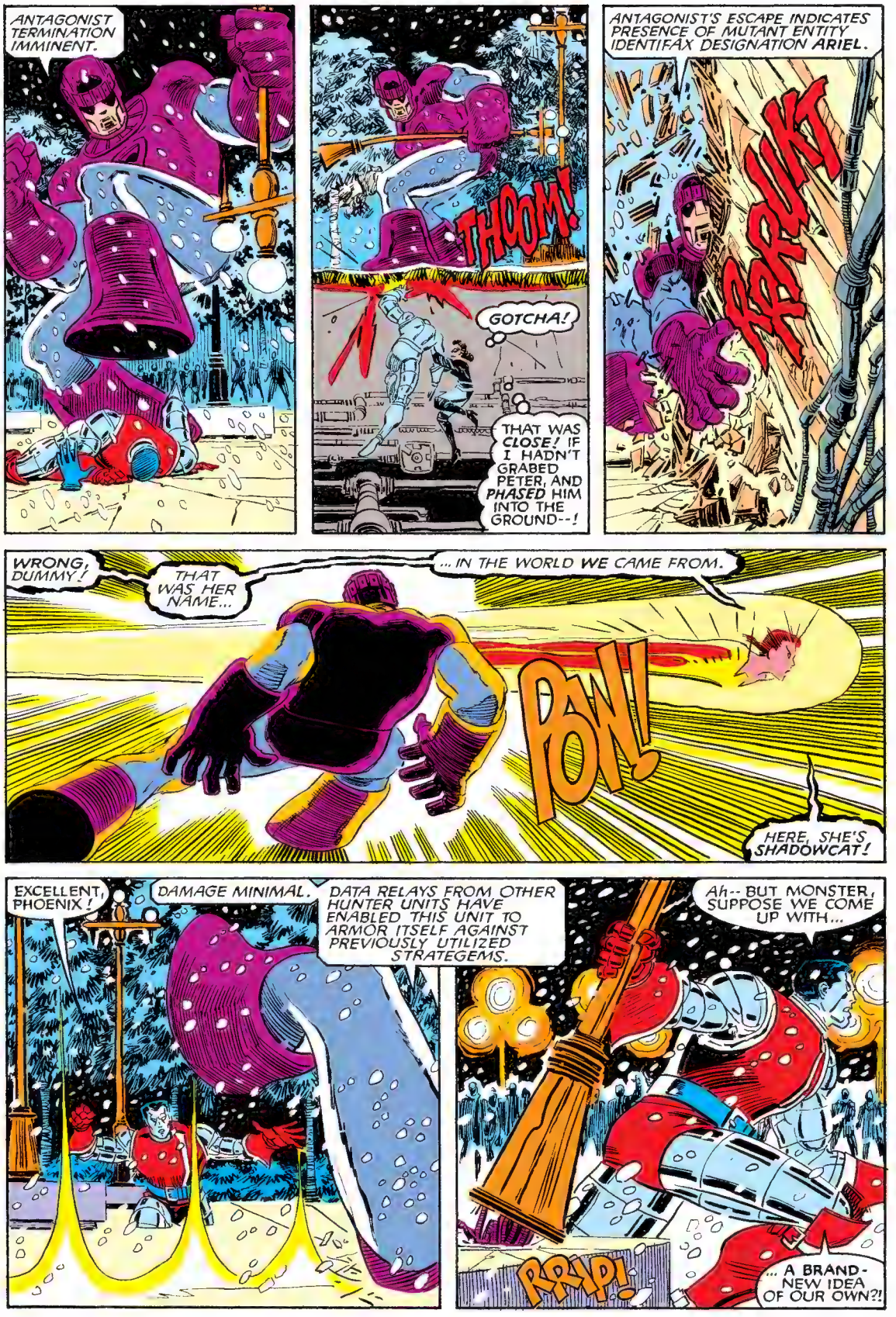

I AM TOO WEAK TO PENETRATE THE MECHANISM'S ARMOR OR NEUTRALIZE GRAVITY ABOUT IT-- ALLOWING THE VELOCITY OF EARTH'S ROTATION TO HURL IT INTO SPACE--
--BUT I CAN CREATE A MAGNETIC VORTEX-- A WHIRLWIND IN REVERSE-- TO SUCK SUPER-COLD AIR FROM THE VERY TOP OF THE ATMOSPHERE TO SEA-LEVEL.
IN A SPLIT-SECOND, THE ROBOTS' SURFACE TEMPERATURE SHOULD DROP TO NEAR ABSOLUTE-ZERO.
HIS METAL SKIN WILL BECOME BRITTLE-- VULNERABLE TO A BLOW!
SIMULTANEOUSLY-- TO THE AMAZEMENT OF ALL-- THE CITY BY THE BAY EXPERIENCES SOMETHING THAT HAS OCCURED BUT RARELY IN ITS HISTORY...
... A SNOWFALL.
I CAN'T DRIVE THE PSYCHES ROGUE ABSORBED FROM HER HEAD-- THEY'LL FADE NATURALLY IN TIME, BACK TO THEIR RIGHTFUL BODIES-- BUT I CAN MAKE ROGUE'S PERSONALITY DOMINANT.
ALL THE INCREDIBLE POWER THE BEYONDER GAVE ME...
...AND I CAN'T DO ANY MORE FOR HER...
...THAN A LITTLE STOPGAP FIRST AID.
THE POWER'S HIS, TO BEGIN WITH! WHY DOESN'T HE USE IT TO HELP PEOPLE--RATHER THAN MAKE THEM KILL, OR BE KILLED, FOR HIS AMUSEMENT?!!
W'AOW--
-- AH FIGURED AH'D NEVER THINK CLEARLY AGAIN.
WE NEED YOUR MUSCLES, ROGUE, TO FINISH THIS FIGHT!

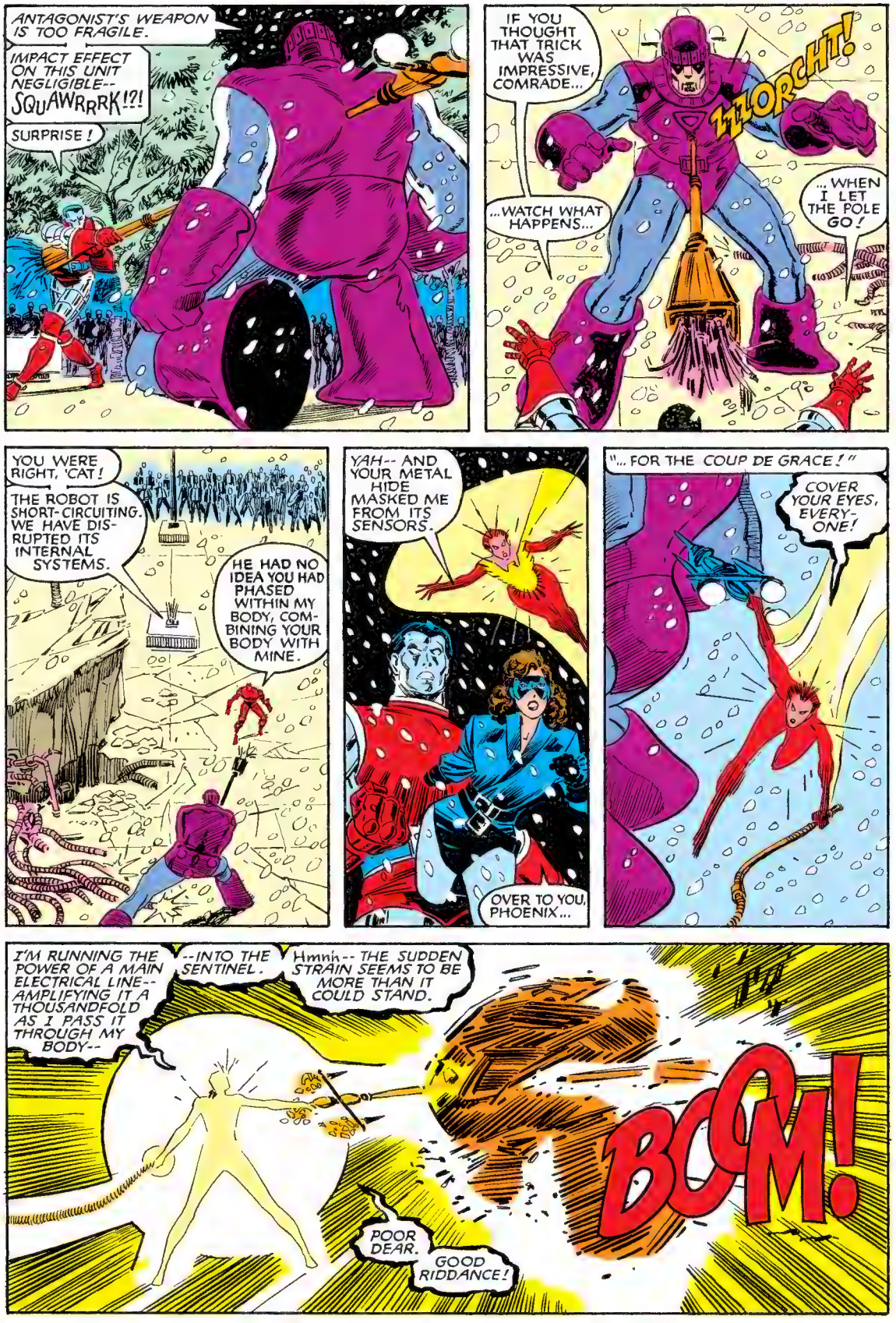

MY PLEASURE, RED!
WHOA-HO!
KWHAM!
HEY, Y'ALL--LOOK WHAT'S COMIN'!


IN THE CYCLONE'S HEART IS THE BLACK-BIRD, DRAWN GENTLY DOWN FROM THE IONOSPHERE--
-- ITS DESCENT AS CAREFULLY CONTROLLED BY MAGNETO AS HIS WHIRLWIND...


MEANWHILE, A MILE AND A BIT UPTOWN, AT THE INTERSECTION OF MARKET AND CHURCH...
ANTAGONIST IDENTIFAXED AS MUTANT ENTITY COLOSSUS.

PHYSICAL SUBSTANCE CONSISTS OF ORGANIC STEEL.
INHERENT TENSILE STRENGTH IS CONSIDERABLE...
...BUT IT CAN BE OVER-COME.
BWHANG!


ANTAGONIST TERMINATION IMMINENT.
THOOM!
GOTCHA!
THAT WAS CLOSE! IF I HADN'T GRABED PETER, AND PHASED HIM INTO THE GROUND--!
ANTAGONIST'S ESCAPE INDICATES PRESENCE OF MUTANT ENTITY IDENTIFAX DESIGNATION ARIEL.
RRRUKT
WRONG, DUMMY!
THAT WAS HER NAME...
... IN THE WORLD WE CAME FROM.
POW!
HERE, SHE'S SHADOWCAT!
EXCELLENT, PHOENIX!
DAMAGE MINIMAL.
DATA RELAYS FROM OTHER HUNTER UNITS HAVE ENABLED THIS UNIT TO ARMOR ITSELF AGAINST PREVIOUSLY UTILIZED STRATEGEMS.
Ah-- BUT MONSTER, SUPPOSE WE COME UP WITH...
RRYP!
... A BRAND-NEW IDEA OF OUR OWN?!


ANTAGONIST'S WEAPON IS TOO FRAGILE.
IMPACT EFFECT ON THIS UNIT NEGLIGIBLE-- SQUAWRRRK!?!
SURPRISE!
IF YOU THOUGHT THAT TRICK WAS IMPRESSIVE, COMRADE...
...WATCH WHAT HAPPENS...
TLORCHT!
...WHEN I LET THE POLE GO!
YOU WERE RIGHT, 'CAT!
THE ROBOT IS SHORT-CIRCUITING. WE HAVE DISRUPTED ITS INTERNAL SYSTEMS.
HE HAD NO IDEA YOU HAD PHASED WITHIN MY BODY, COMBINING YOUR BODY WITH MINE.
YAH-- AND YOUR METAL HIDE MASKED ME FROM ITS SENSORS.
OVER TO YOU, PHOENIX...
"... FOR THE COUP DE GRACE!"
COVER YOUR EYES, EVERYONE!
I'M RUNNING THE POWER OF A MAIN ELECTRICAL LINE-- AMPLIFYING IT A THOUSANDFOLD AS I PASS IT THROUGH MY BODY--
--INTO THE SENTINEL.
Hmmh-- THE SUDDEN STRAIN SEEMS TO BE MORE THAN IT COULD STAND.
BOOM!
POOR DEAR.
GOOD RIDDANCE!

ALCATRAZ--
--QUITE A WHILE LATER...
I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED!
IT'LL TAKE THE X-MEN DAYS TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE BY THIS LOUSY FIGHT.
BUT WE FIGURE IT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO FOR THE PEOPLE-- THE CITY-- WE INADVERTENTLY TERRORIZED.
THE X-MEN ARE ALIVE AND WELL, PHOENIX, THANKS TO YOU.
RACHEL-- YOU SAVED THEM!
I SAVED NOTHING!
SLAP!
YOU GAVE ME THE POWER, YOU SET UP THE SITUATION, YOU CREATED THE THREAT!
I WAS LITTLE BETTER THAN A TOY-- A PUPPET, PRANCING ABOUT FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT!
I SOUGHT TO RESTORE YOUR INNER BALANCE, TO EXPUNGE YOUR GUILT SO THAT YOU MIGHT BECOME ONE WITH YOURSELF-- AS I HOPE TO BECOME WITH MINE.
IT ISN'T THAT EASY! YOU DON'T JUST GIVE SOMEBODY THAT KNOWLEDGE.
IF IT'S TO MEAN ANYTHING-- IF WE'RE TRULY TO LEARN, TO GROW, AS INDIVIDUALS AND A SPECIES--
-- IT HAS TO BE EARNED!
YOU MAY MEAN THE BEST, BUT ALL YOU'VE DONE--
-- ALL, I THINK, YOU'LL EVER DO--
-- IS HARM.
NEXT ISSUE: THE FINAL SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THE X-MEN AND THE BEYONDER--
CROSSROADS!

MARVEL
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
CONTINUES IN THIS ISSUE!
SECRET WARS
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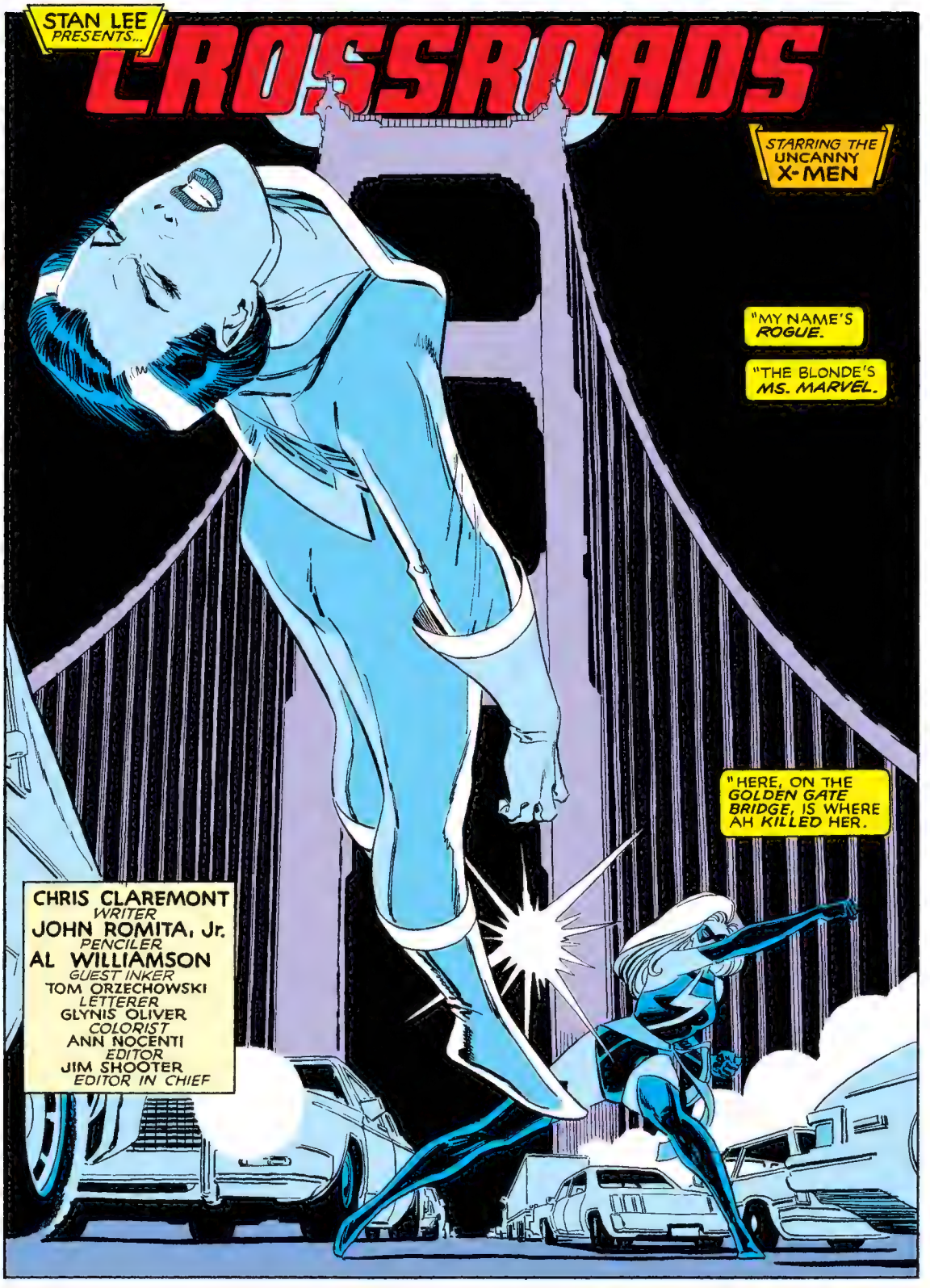
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
PHOENIX VERSUS THE BEYONDER!
THIS UNIVERSE ISN'T BIG ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF THEM!
JR.JR. & A.W.


STAN LEE PRESENTS...
CROSSROADS
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
"MY NAME'S ROGUE.
"THE BLONDE'S MS. MARVEL.
"HERE, ON THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, IS WHERE AH KILLED HER.
CHRIS CLAREMONT
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JOHN ROMITA, Jr.
PENCILER
AL WILLIAMSON
GUEST INKER
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EDITOR
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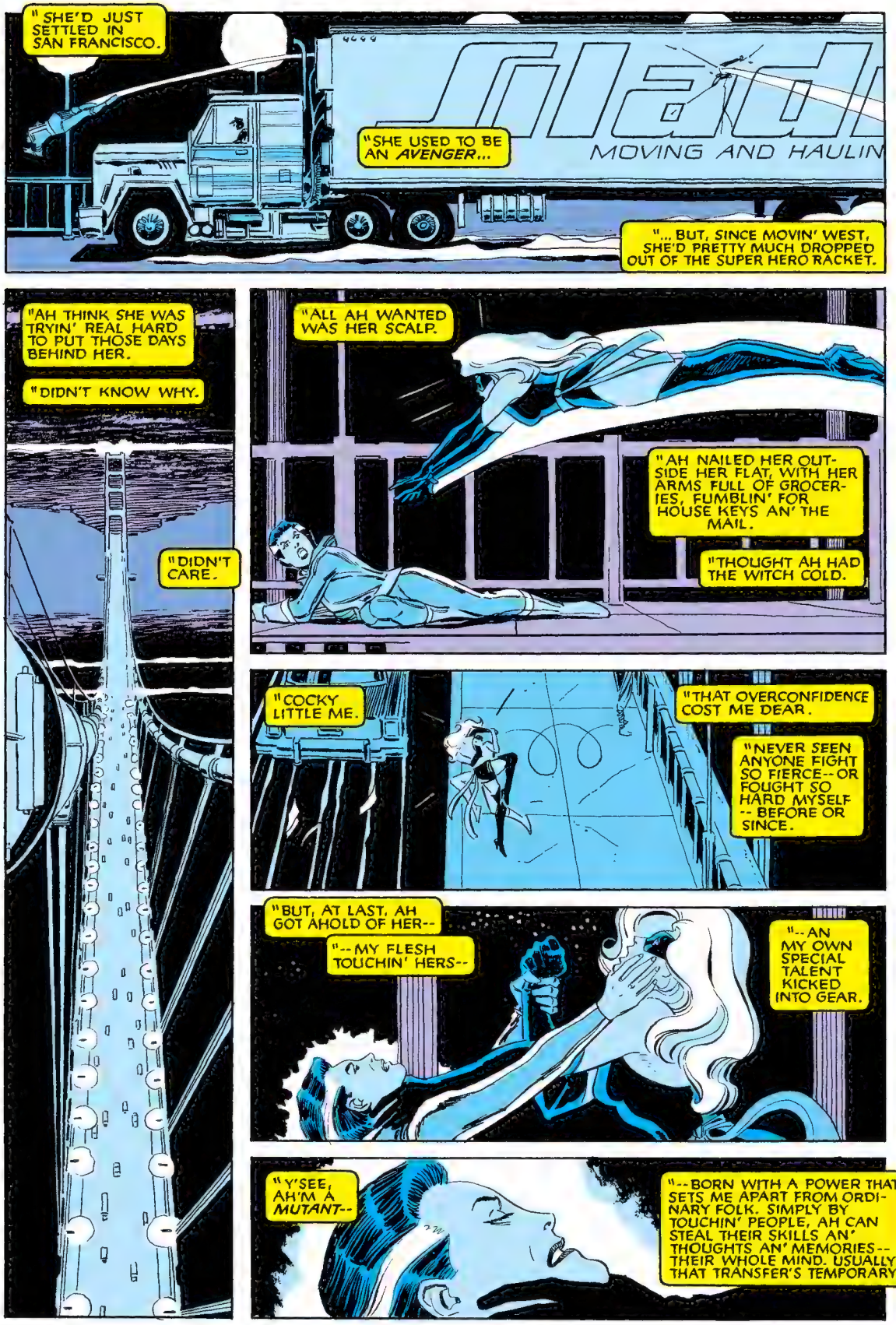
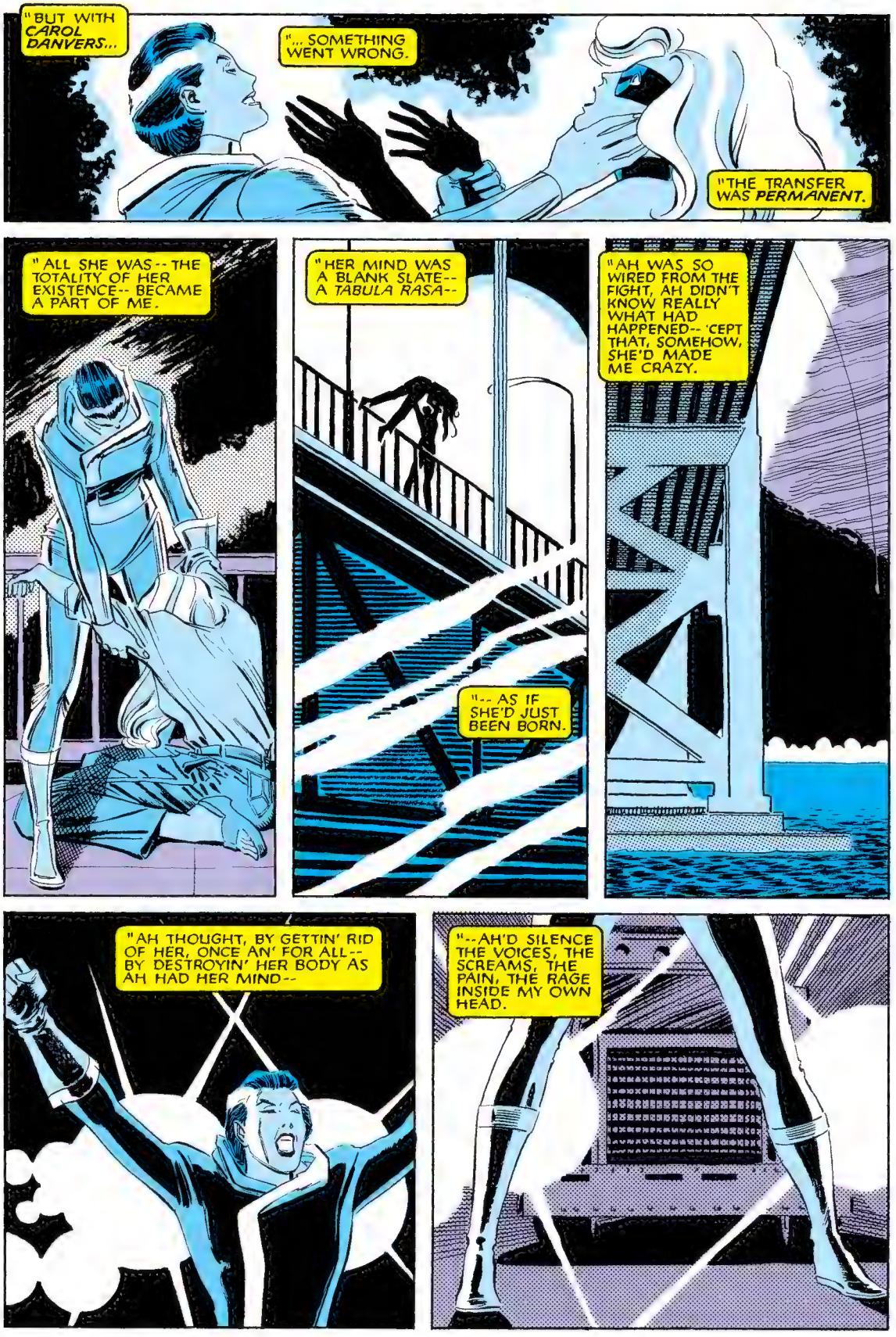
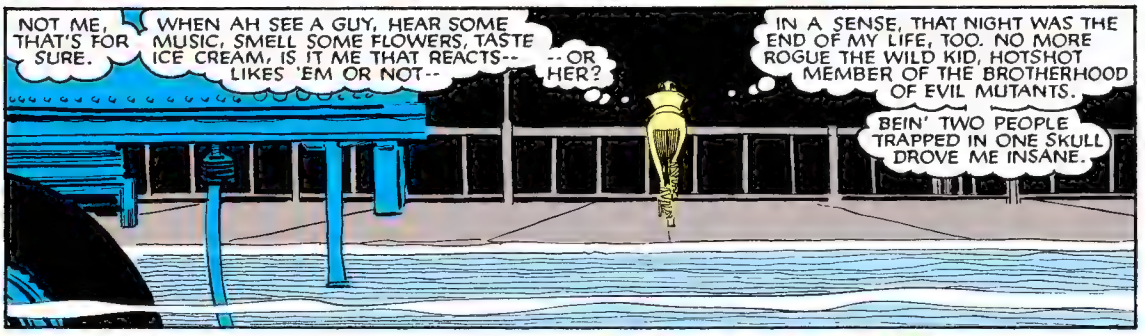
EDITOR IN CHIEF


"SHE'D JUST SETTLED IN SAN FRANCISCO.
"SHE USED TO BE AN *AVENGER*...
MOVING AND HAULIN
"... BUT, SINCE MOVIN' WEST, SHE'D PRETTY MUCH DROPPED OUT OF THE SUPER HERO RACKET.
"AH THINK SHE WAS TRYIN' REAL HARD TO PUT THOSE DAYS BEHIND HER.
"DIDN'T KNOW WHY.
"DIDN'T CARE.
"ALL AH WANTED WAS HER SCALP.
"AH NAILED HER OUTSIDE HER FLAT, WITH HER ARMS FULL OF GROCERIES, FUMBLIN' FOR HOUSE KEYS AN' THE MAIL.
"THOUGHT AH HAD THE WITCH COLD.
"COCKY LITTLE ME.
"THAT OVERCONFIDENCE COST ME DEAR.
"NEVER SEEN ANYONE FIGHT SO FIERCE--OR FOUGHT SO HARD MYSELF -- BEFORE OR SINCE.
"BUT, AT LAST, AH GOT AHOLD OF HER--
"--MY FLESH TOUCHIN' HERS--
"--AN MY OWN SPECIAL TALENT KICKED INTO GEAR.
"Y'SEE, AH'M A *MUTANT*--
"--BORN WITH A POWER THAT SETS ME APART FROM ORDINARY FOLK. SIMPLY BY TOUCHIN' PEOPLE, AH CAN STEAL THEIR SKILLS AN' THOUGHTS AN' MEMORIES--THEIR WHOLE MIND. USUALLY, THAT TRANSFER'S TEMPORARY.


"BUT WITH CAROL DANVERS...
"... SOMETHING WENT WRONG.
"THE TRANSFER WAS PERMANENT.
"ALL SHE WAS -- THE TOTALITY OF HER EXISTENCE -- BECAME A PART OF ME.
"HER MIND WAS A BLANK SLATE -- A TABULA RASA --
"-- AS IF SHE'D JUST BEEN BORN.
"AH WAS SO WIRED FROM THE FIGHT, AH DIDN'T KNOW REALLY WHAT HAD HAPPENED -- 'CEPT THAT, SOMEHOW, SHE'D MADE ME CRAZY.
"AH THOUGHT, BY GETTIN' RID OF HER, ONCE AN' FOR ALL -- BY DESTROYIN' HER BODY AS AH HAD HER MIND --
"-- AH'D SILENCE THE VOICES, THE SCREAMS, THE PAIN, THE RAGE INSIDE MY OWN HEAD.

"SHOULD'A KNOWN BETTER.
"SHE'S A PART OF ME TILL THE DAY AH DIE.
"AN' WHO'S TO KNOW ANY-MORE WHERE CAROL DANVERS ENDS AN' ROGUE BEGINS?


NOT ME, THAT'S FOR SURE.
WHEN AH SEE A GUY, HEAR SOME MUSIC, SMELL SOME FLOWERS, TASTE ICE CREAM, IS IT ME THAT REACTS-- LIKES 'EM OR NOT--
--OR HER?
IN A SENSE, THAT NIGHT WAS THE END OF MY LIFE, TOO. NO MORE ROGUE THE WILD KID, HOTSHOT MEMBER OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS.
BEIN' TWO PEOPLE TRAPPED IN ONE SKULL DROVE ME INSANE.

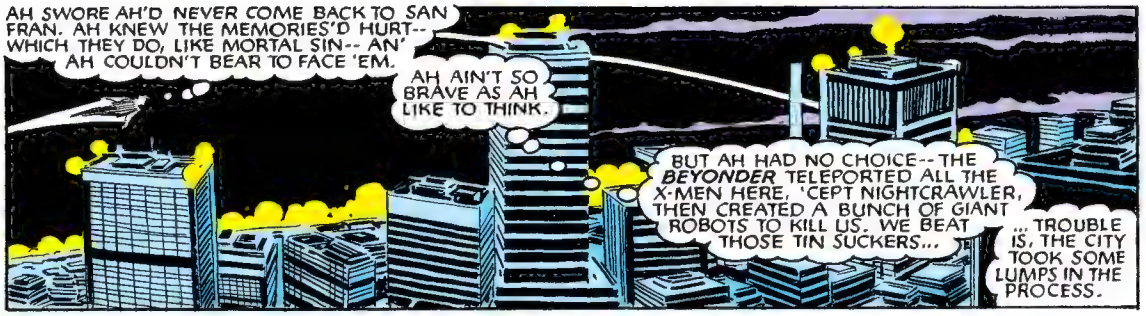
AN' THE ONLY PERSON WHO PROVED ABLE TO HELP ME WAS THE BROTHERHOOD'S ARCH ENEMY, CHARLES XAVIER--

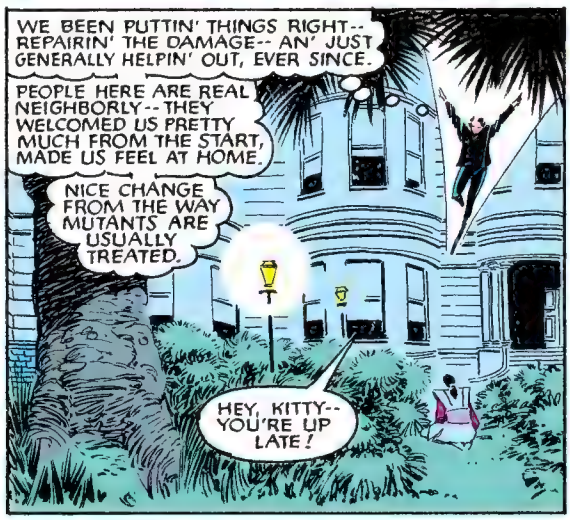
--FOUNDER OF THE X-MEN.
THEY'RE MUTANTS LIKE ME--
-- ONLY WHERE AH WAS A CROOK...
...THEY'RE HEROES.

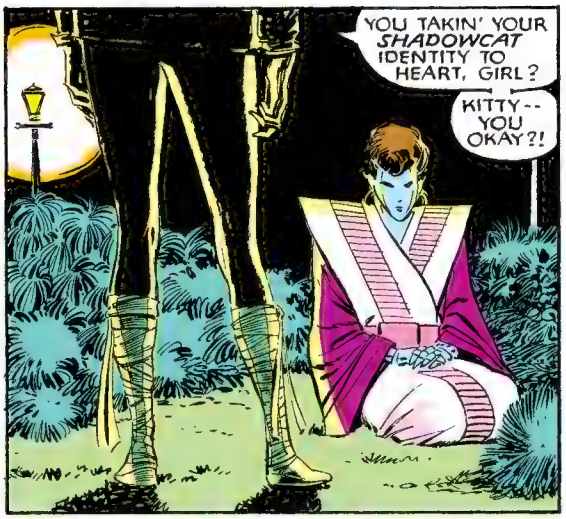
NOW...
...AH'M ONE OF THEM.

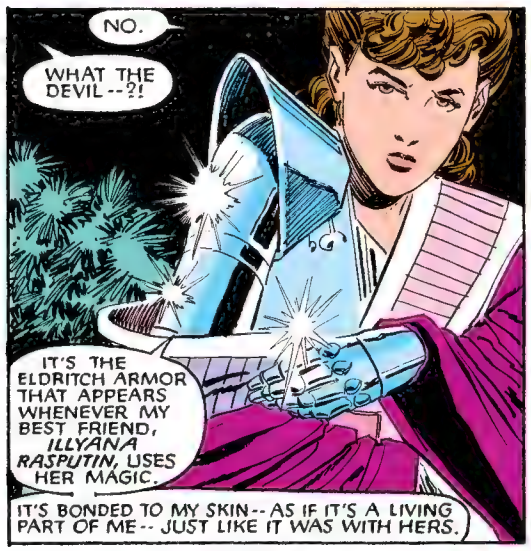
AH'VE FOUGHT BY THEIR SIDE, BEEN HURT IN THEIR DEFENSE--
-- EVEN SAVED THE WORLD.

BUT AH KNOW IN MY HEART...
...NO MATTER HOW MUCH GOOD AH DO...
... IT'LL NEVER MAKE UP FOR WHAT AH DID.
THOSE SCALES, NOTHIN'LL EVER BALANCE.

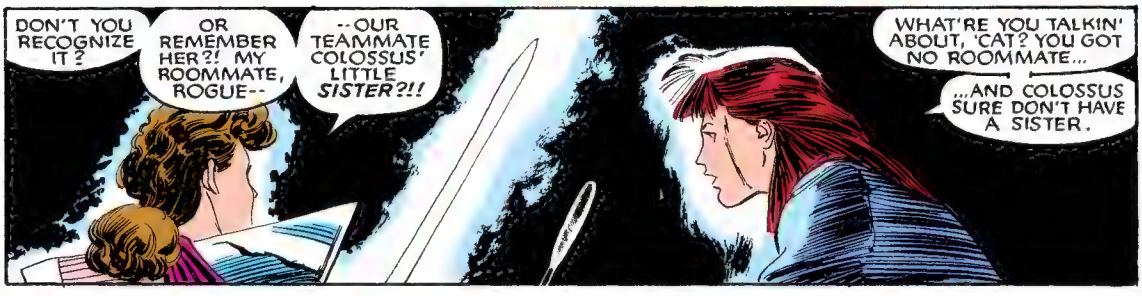

AH SWORE AH'D NEVER COME BACK TO SAN FRAN. AH KNEW THE MEMORIES'D HURT-- WHICH THEY DO, LIKE MORTAL SIN-- AN' AH COULDN'T BEAR TO FACE 'EM.
AH AIN'T SO BRAVE AS AH LIKE TO THINK.
BUT AH HAD NO CHOICE-- THE BEYONDER TELEPORTED ALL THE X-MEN HERE, 'CEPT NIGHTCRAWLER, THEN CREATED A BUNCH OF GIANT ROBOTS TO KILL US. WE BEAT THOSE TIN SUCKERS...
... TROUBLE IS, THE CITY TOOK SOME LUMPS IN THE PROCESS.


WE BEEN PUTTIN' THINGS RIGHT-- REPAIRIN' THE DAMAGE-- AN' JUST GENERALLY HELPIN' OUT, EVER SINCE.
PEOPLE HERE ARE REAL NEIGHBORLY-- THEY WELCOMED US PRETTY MUCH FROM THE START, MADE US FEEL AT HOME.
NICE CHANGE FROM THE WAY MUTANTS ARE USUALLY TREATED.
HEY, KITTY-- YOU'RE UP LATE!

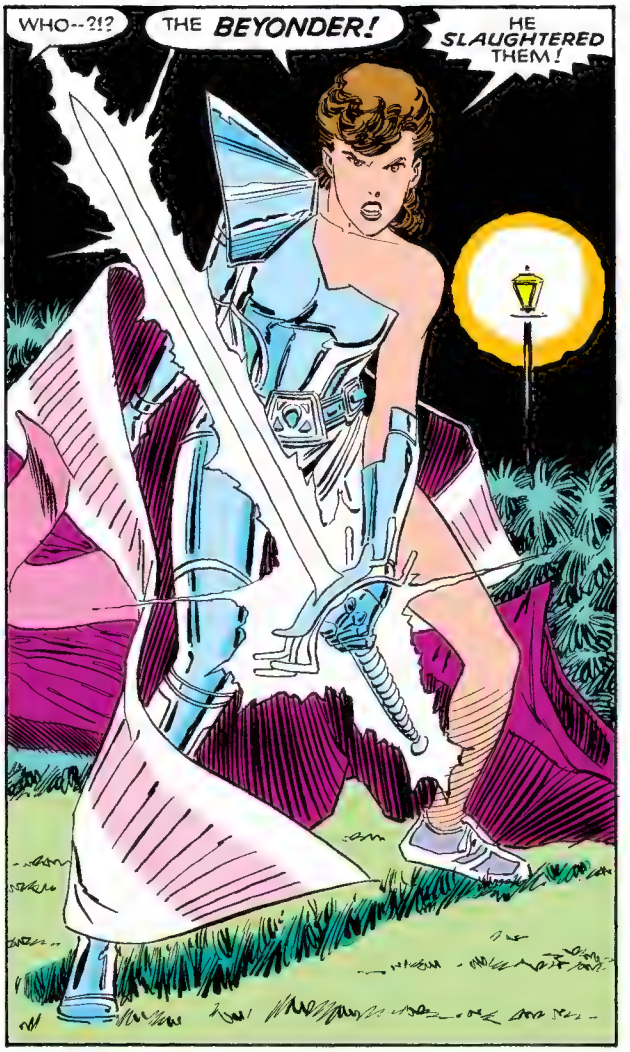

YOU TAKIN' YOUR SHADOWCAT IDENTITY TO HEART, GIRL?
KITTY-- YOU OKAY?!


NO.
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!
IT'S THE ELDRITCH ARMOR THAT APPEARS WHENEVER MY BEST FRIEND, ILLYANA RASPUTIN, USES HER MAGIC.
IT'S BONDED TO MY SKIN-- AS IF IT'S A LIVING PART OF ME-- JUST LIKE IT WAS WITH HERS.

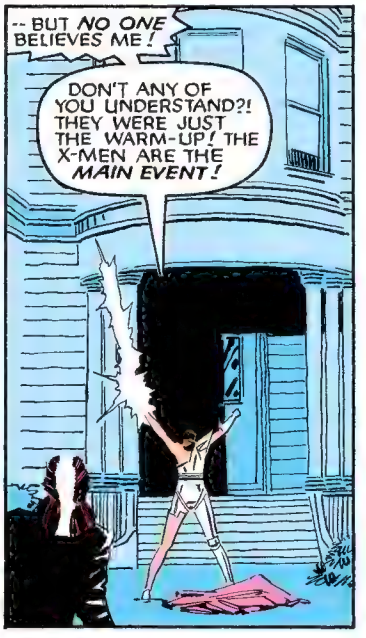
AND THIS IS HER SOUL-SWORD.
GLORY--?!
THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF HER ARCANE MIGHT.

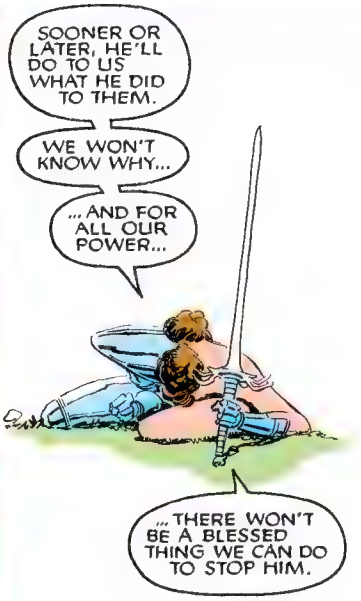

DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE IT?
OR REMEMBER HER?! MY ROOMMATE, ROGUE--
--OUR TEAMMATE COLOSSUS' LITTLE SISTER?!!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, 'CAT? YOU GOT NO ROOMMATE...
...AND COLOSSUS SURE DON'T HAVE A SISTER.

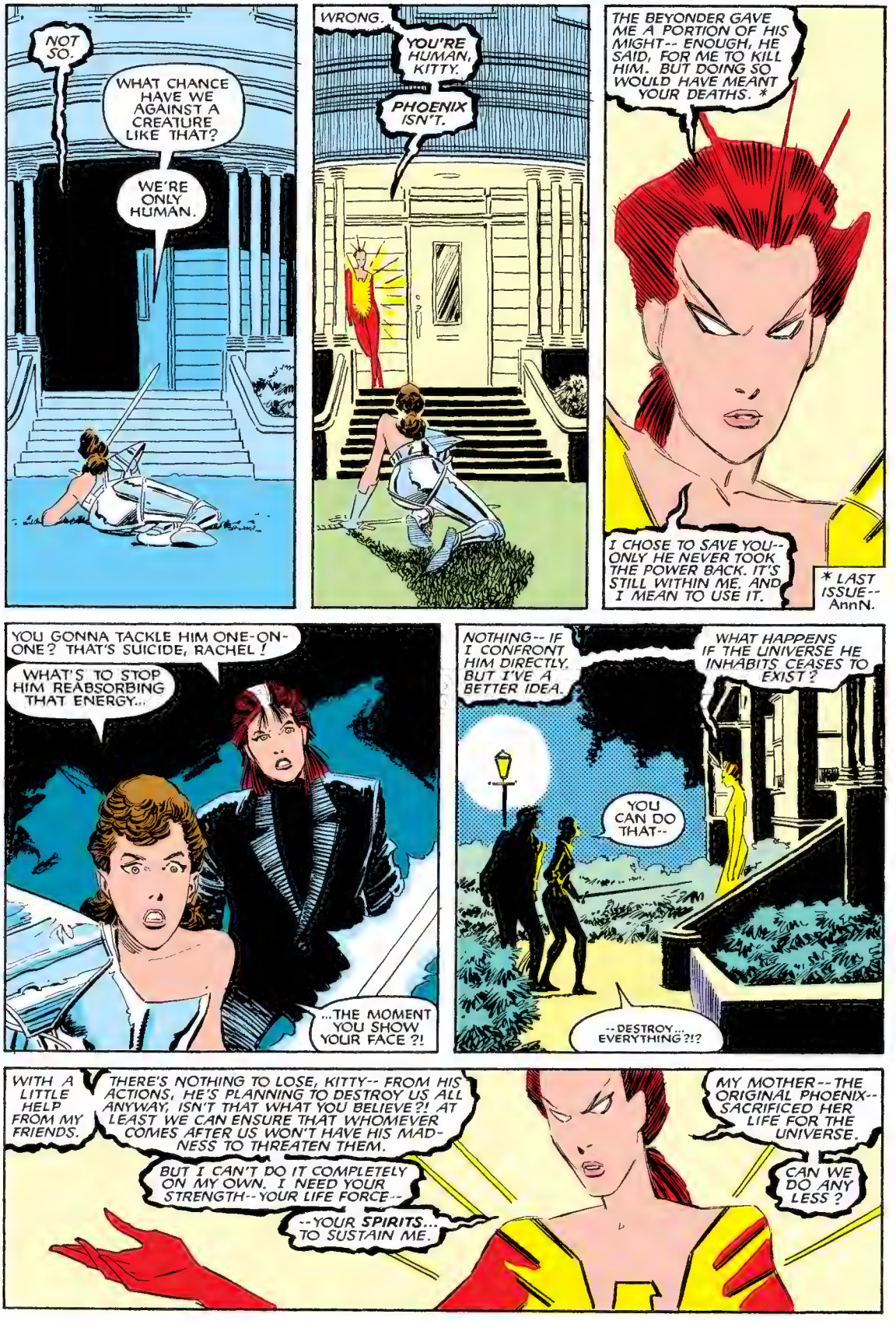
HOW CAN AH REMEMBER SOMEBODY WHO DOESN'T EXIST?!
WHAT ABOUT THE *NEW MUTANTS*?!
WHO'RE THEY?
CUT THIS OUT, GIRL! IT'S TOO LATE-- AN' AH'M TOO TIRED-- FOR GAMES!
HE DID IT!
HE *KILLED* THEM, ROGUE! THEY WERE KIDS-- SOME OF THEM HARDLY MORE THAN *BABIES*-- AND HE *ERASED* THEM, AS CASUALLY AND COMPLETELY AS WE MIGHT WIPE WORDS OFF A BLACKBOARD.

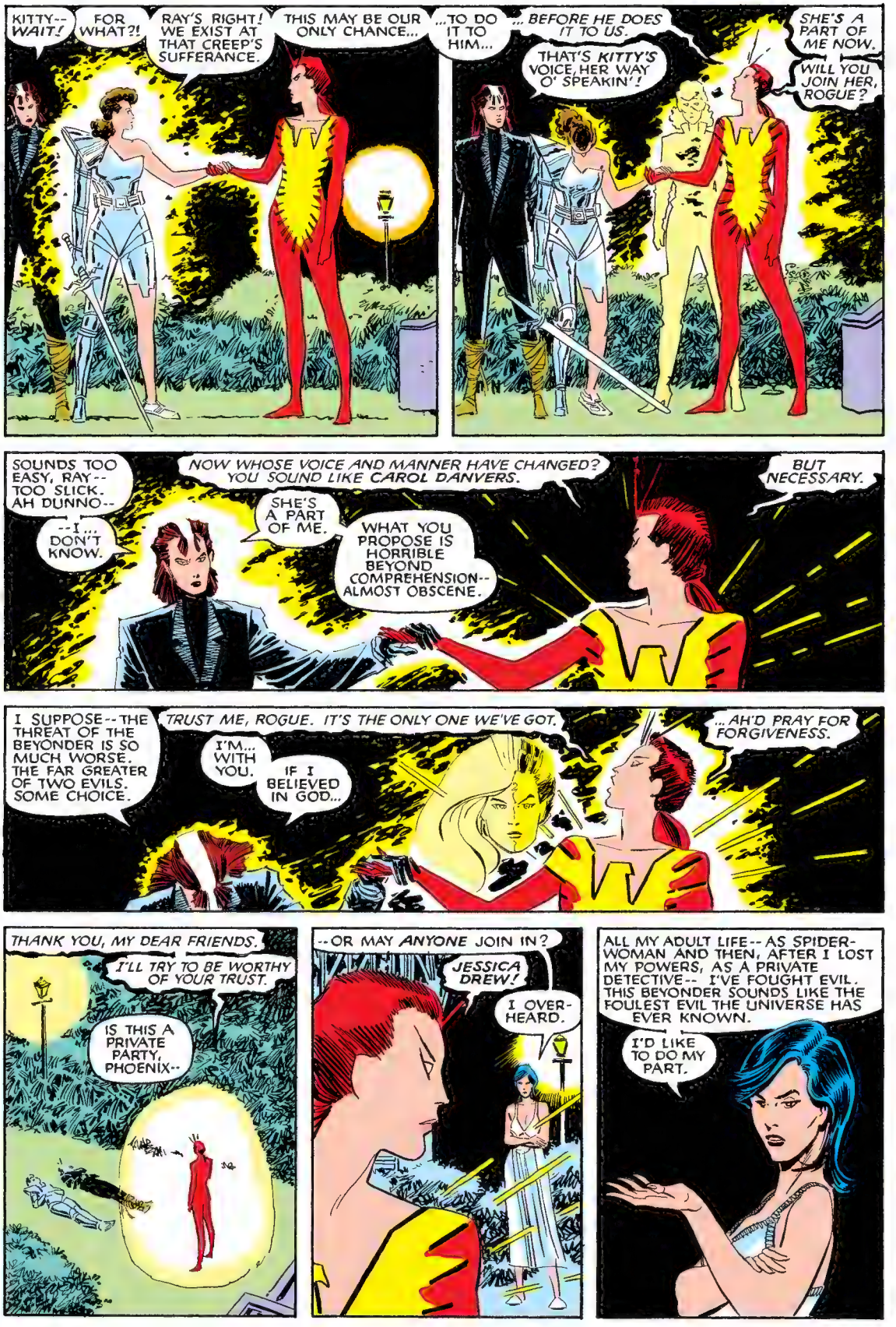

WHO--?!?
THE *BEYONDER!*
HE *SLAUGHTERED* THEM!

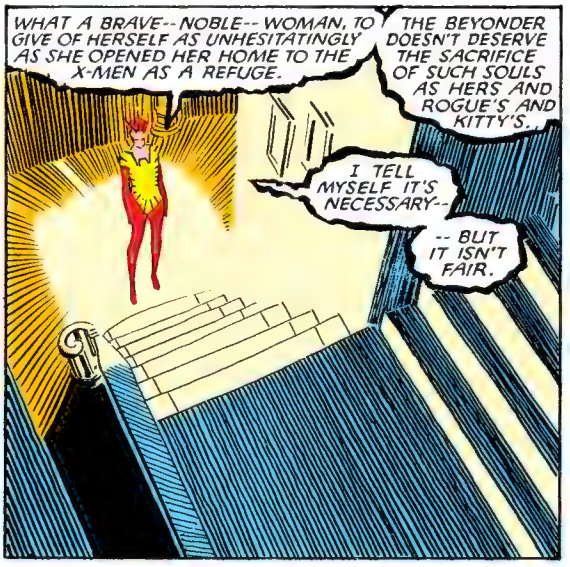
BUT FOR SOME REASON-- MAYBE BECAUSE ILLYANA AND I HAVE SOME SORT OF BOND BETWEEN OUR SOULS-- I REMEMBER.
A FEW WEEKS BACK, HE STRIPPED HER OF HER MAGIC AND MADE HER HIS DISCIPLE.* THAT'S WHEN I DISCOVERED OUR LINK-- BECAUSE HER SWORD AND ARMOR SUDDENLY CAME TO ME. BUT SHE REJECTED HIM. AND NOW HE'S TAKEN HIS REVENGE.
I'M THE *ONLY* PERSON WHO KNOWS SHE AND THE NEW MUTANTS EVER EXISTED--
*NM #36-- A.

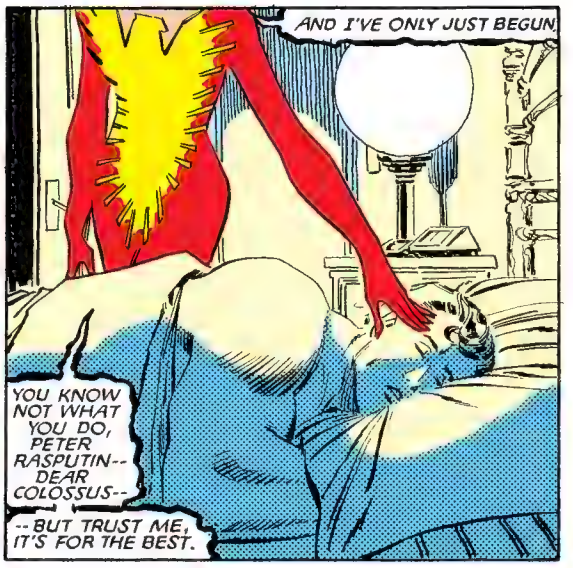

-- BUT *NO ONE* BELIEVES ME!
DON'T ANY OF YOU UNDERSTAND?! THEY WERE JUST THE WARM-UP! THE X-MEN ARE THE *MAIN EVENT!*

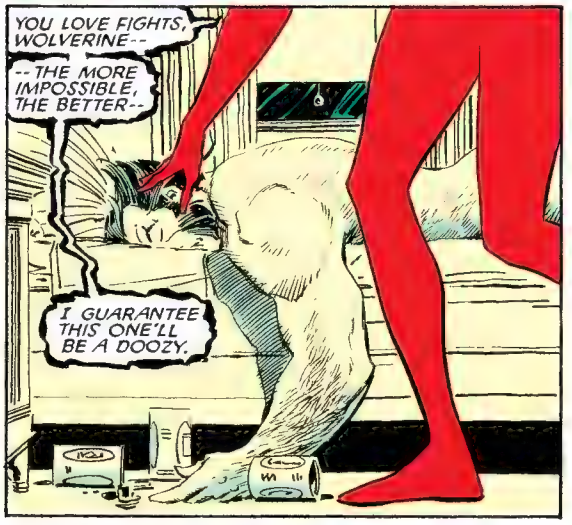

SOONER OR LATER, HE'LL DO TO US WHAT HE DID TO THEM.
WE WON'T KNOW WHY...
...AND FOR ALL OUR POWER...
...THERE WON'T BE A BLESSED THING WE CAN DO TO STOP HIM.


NOT SO.
WHAT CHANCE HAVE WE AGAINST A CREATURE LIKE THAT?
WE'RE ONLY HUMAN.
WRONG.
YOU'RE HUMAN, KITTY.
PHOENIX ISN'T.
THE BEYONDER GAVE ME A PORTION OF HIS MIGHT-- ENOUGH, HE SAID, FOR ME TO KILL HIM. BUT DOING SO WOULD HAVE MEANT YOUR DEATHS. *
I CHOSE TO SAVE YOU-- ONLY HE NEVER TOOK THE POWER BACK. IT'S STILL WITHIN ME. AND I MEAN TO USE IT.
* LAST ISSUE-- AnnN.
YOU GONNA TACKLE HIM ONE-ON-ONE? THAT'S SUICIDE, RACHEL!
WHAT'S TO STOP HIM REABSORBING THAT ENERGY...
...THE MOMENT YOU SHOW YOUR FACE?!
NOTHING-- IF I CONFRONT HIM DIRECTLY. BUT I'VE A BETTER IDEA.
WHAT HAPPENS IF THE UNIVERSE HE INHABITS CEASES TO EXIST?
YOU CAN DO THAT--
--DESTROY... EVERYTHING?!?
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS.
THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE, KITTY-- FROM HIS ACTIONS, HE'S PLANNING TO DESTROY US ALL ANYWAY, ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU BELIEVE?! AT LEAST WE CAN ENSURE THAT WHOMEVER COMES AFTER US WON'T HAVE HIS MADNESS TO THREATEN THEM.
BUT I CAN'T DO IT COMPLETELY ON MY OWN. I NEED YOUR STRENGTH-- YOUR LIFE FORCE--
--YOUR SPIRITS... TO SUSTAIN ME.
MY MOTHER-- THE ORIGINAL PHOENIX-- SACRIFICED HER LIFE FOR THE UNIVERSE.
CAN WE DO ANY LESS?

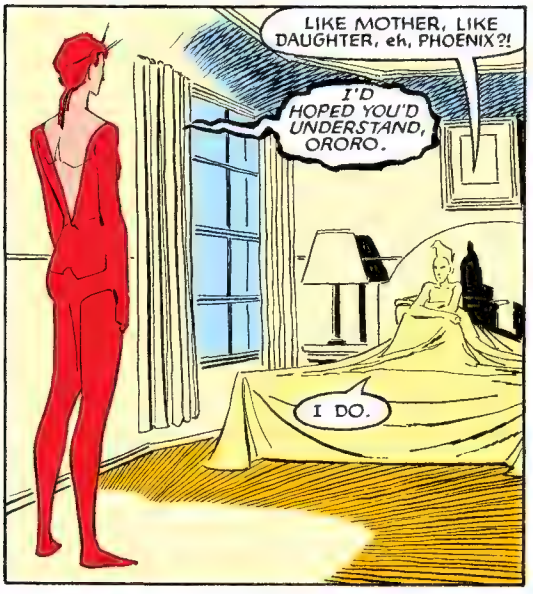

KITTY--WAIT!
FOR WHAT?!
RAY'S RIGHT! WE EXIST AT THAT CREEP'S SUFFERANCE.
THIS MAY BE OUR ONLY CHANCE...
...TO DO IT TO HIM...
... BEFORE HE DOES IT TO US.
THAT'S KITTY'S VOICE, HER WAY O' SPEAKIN'!
SHE'S A PART OF ME NOW.
WILL YOU JOIN HER, ROGUE?
SOUNDS TOO EASY, RAY--TOO SLICK. AH DUNNO--
--I... DON'T KNOW.
NOW WHOSE VOICE AND MANNER HAVE CHANGED? YOU SOUND LIKE CAROL DANVERS.
SHE'S A PART OF ME.
WHAT YOU PROPOSE IS HORRIBLE BEYOND COMPREHENSION--ALMOST OBSCENE.
BUT NECESSARY.
I SUPPOSE--THE THREAT OF THE BEYONDER IS SO MUCH WORSE. THE FAR GREATER OF TWO EVILS. SOME CHOICE.
TRUST ME, ROGUE. IT'S THE ONLY ONE WE'VE GOT.
I'M... WITH YOU.
IF I BELIEVED IN GOD...
... AH'D PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS.
THANK YOU, MY DEAR FRIENDS.
I'LL TRY TO BE WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST.
IS THIS A PRIVATE PARTY, PHOENIX--
--OR MAY ANYONE JOIN IN?
JESSICA DREW!
I OVERHEARD.
ALL MY ADULT LIFE--AS SPIDER-WOMAN AND THEN, AFTER I LOST MY POWERS, AS A PRIVATE DETECTIVE-- I'VE FOUGHT EVIL. THIS BEYONDER SOUNDS LIKE THE FOULEST EVIL THE UNIVERSE HAS EVER KNOWN.
I'D LIKE TO DO MY PART.

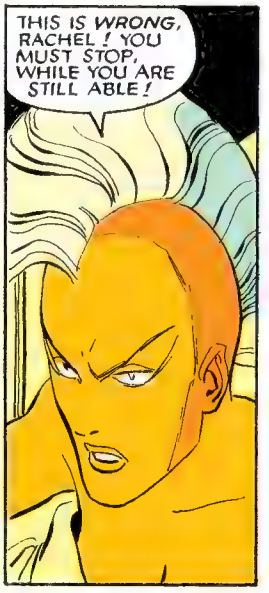

WHAT A BRAVE-- NOBLE-- WOMAN, TO GIVE OF HERSELF AS UNHESITATINGLY AS SHE OPENED HER HOME TO THE X-MEN AS A REFUGE.
THE BEYONDER DOESN'T DESERVE THE SACRIFICE OF SUCH SOULS AS HERS AND ROGUE'S AND KITTY'S.
I TELL MYSELF IT'S NECESSARY--
-- BUT IT ISN'T FAIR.


AND I'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN
YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO, PETER RASPUTIN-- DEAR COLOSSUS--
-- BUT TRUST ME, IT'S FOR THE BEST.

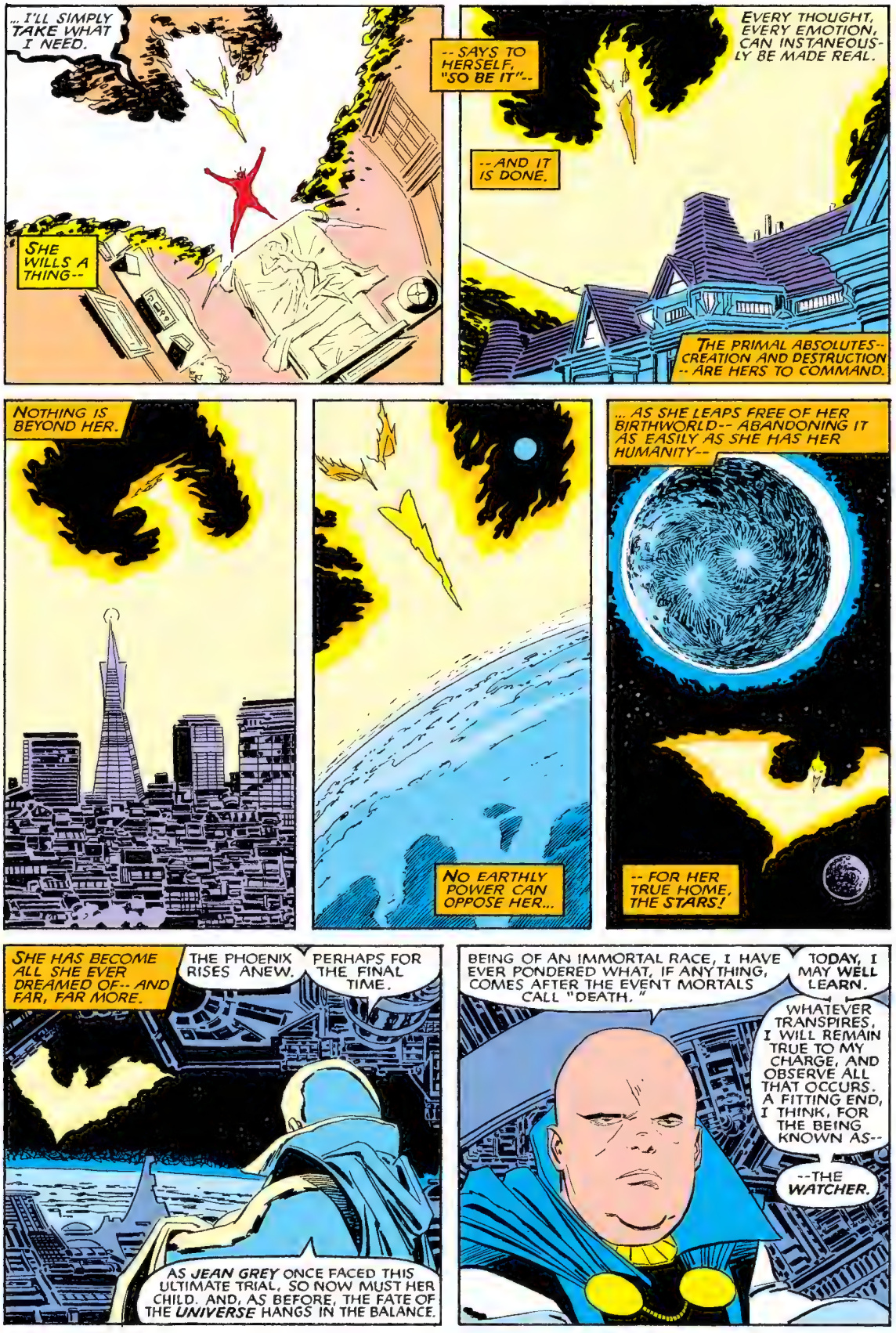

YOU LOVE FIGHTS, WOLVERINE--
-- THE MORE IMPOSSIBLE, THE BETTER--
I GUARANTEE THIS ONE'LL BE A DOOZY.

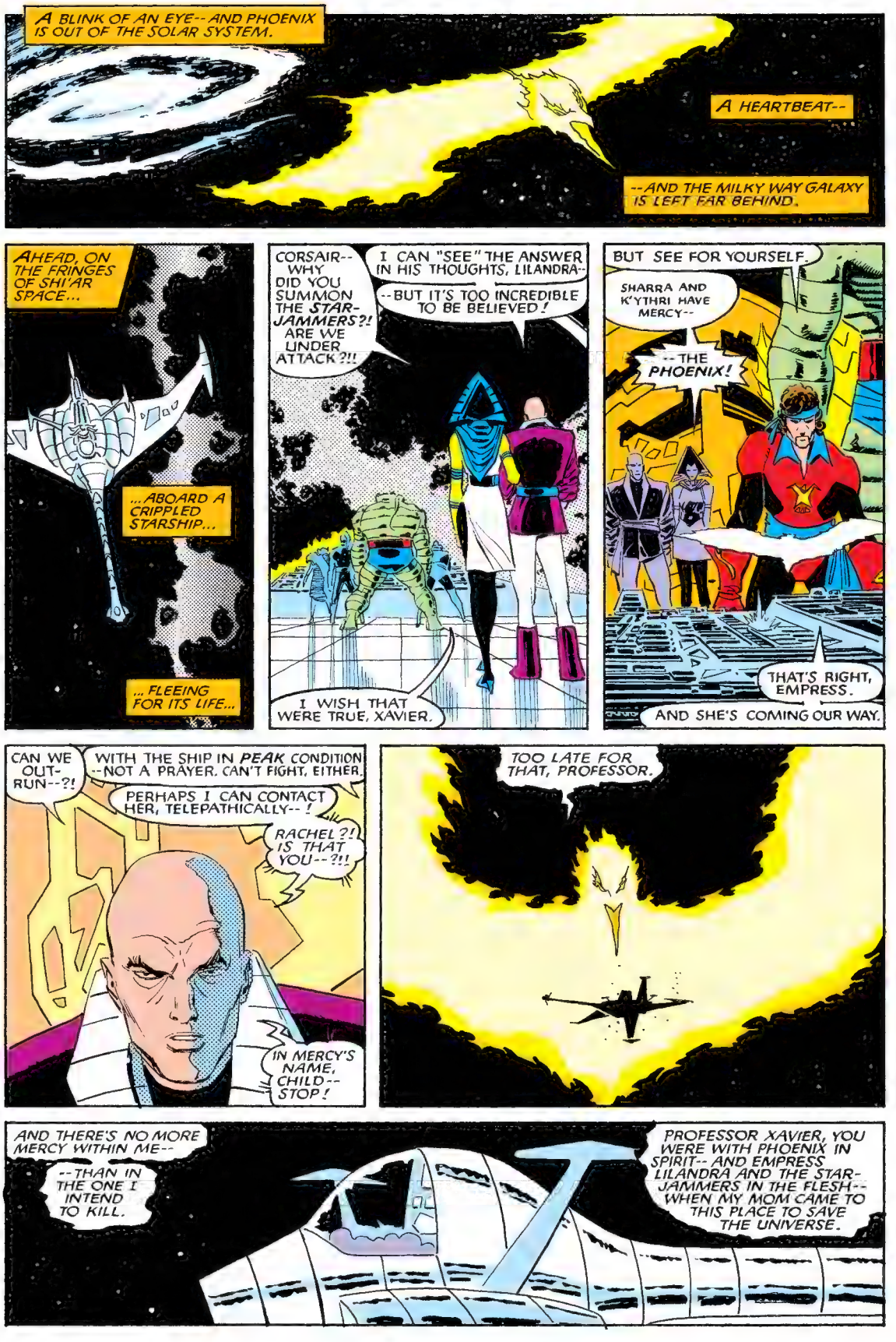
WE'RE MUCH ALIKE, MAGNETO. WE SAW THOSE WE LOVED HERDED TO THEIR DEATH. WE COULDN'T SAVE THEM.
NOW WE BOTH HAVE A SECOND CHANCE.


LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER, eh, PHOENIX?!
I'D HOPED YOU'D UNDERSTAND, ORORO.
I DO.

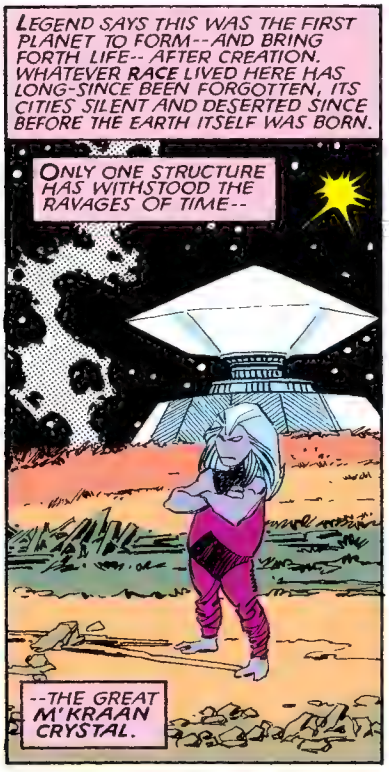

THIS IS WRONG, RACHEL! YOU MUST STOP, WHILE YOU ARE STILL ABLE!

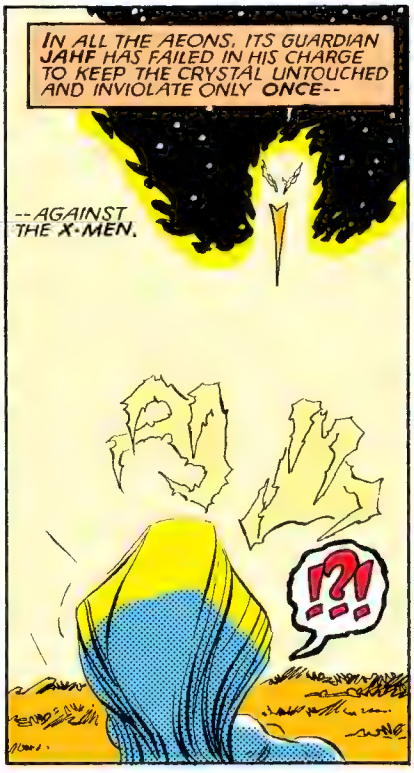
AND LET THE BEYONDER GO ON?
I CANT. I WON'T!
IF YOU WON'T GIVE FREELY OF YOUR SOULFORCE, ORORO...


... I'LL SIMPLY TAKE WHAT I NEED.
SHE WILLS A THING--
-- SAYS TO HERSELF, "SO BE IT"--
--AND IT IS DONE.
EVERY THOUGHT, EVERY EMOTION, CAN INSTANEOUSLY BE MADE REAL.
THE PRIMAL ABSOLUTES-- CREATION AND DESTRUCTION -- ARE HERS TO COMMAND.
NOTHING IS BEYOND HER.
NO EARTHLY POWER CAN OPPOSE HER...
... AS SHE LEAPS FREE OF HER BIRTHWORLD-- ABANDONING IT AS EASILY AS SHE HAS HER HUMANITY--
-- FOR HER TRUE HOME, THE STARS!
SHE HAS BECOME ALL SHE EVER DREAMED OF-- AND FAR, FAR MORE.
THE PHOENIX RISES ANEW.
PERHAPS FOR THE FINAL TIME.
AS JEAN GREY ONCE FACED THIS ULTIMATE TRIAL, SO NOW MUST HER CHILD. AND, AS BEFORE, THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE HANGS IN THE BALANCE.
BEING OF AN IMMORTAL RACE, I HAVE EVER PONDERED WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COMES AFTER THE EVENT MORTALS CALL "DEATH."
TODAY, I MAY WELL LEARN.
WHATEVER TRANSPIRES, I WILL REMAIN TRUE TO MY CHARGE, AND OBSERVE ALL THAT OCCURS. A FITTING END, I THINK, FOR THE BEING KNOWN AS--
--THE WATCHER.

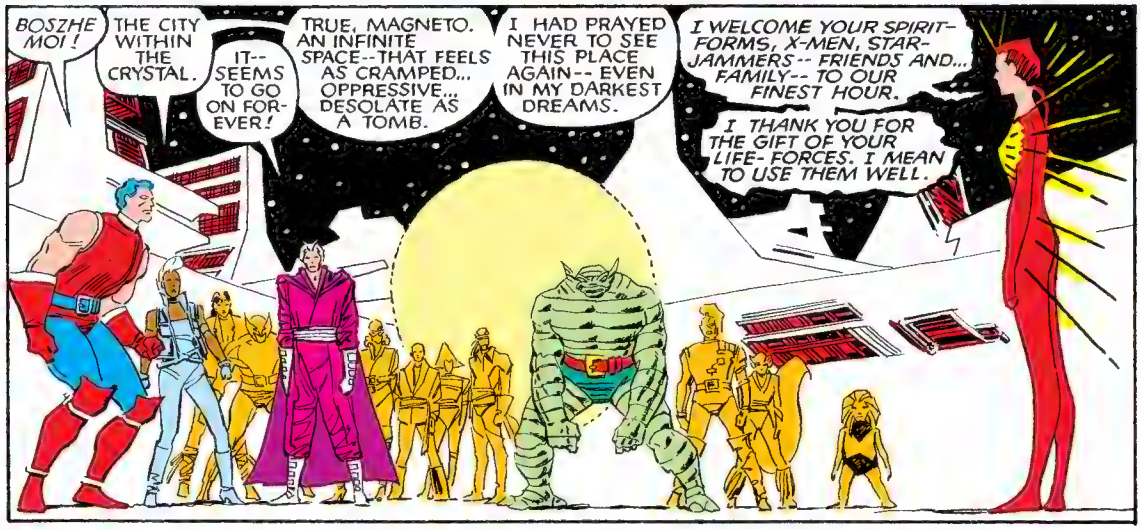

A BLINK OF AN EYE--AND PHOENIX IS OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.
A HEARTBEAT--
--AND THE MILKY WAY GALAXY IS LEFT FAR BEHIND.
AHEAD, ON THE FRINGES OF SHI'AR SPACE...
...ABOARD A CRIPPLED STARSHIP...
...FLEEING FOR ITS LIFE...
CORSAIR--WHY DID YOU SUMMON THE STAR-JAMMERS?! ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?!!
I CAN "SEE" THE ANSWER IN HIS THOUGHTS, LILANDRA--
--BUT IT'S TOO INCREDIBLE TO BE BELIEVED!
I WISH THAT WERE TRUE, XAVIER.
BUT SEE FOR YOURSELF.
SHARRA AND K'YTHRI HAVE MERCY--
--THE PHOENIX!
THAT'S RIGHT, EMPRESS.
AND SHE'S COMING OUR WAY.
CAN WE OUT-RUN--?!
WITH THE SHIP IN PEAK CONDITION --NOT A PRAYER. CAN'T FIGHT, EITHER.
PERHAPS I CAN CONTACT HER, TELEPATHICALLY--!
RACHEL?! IS THAT YOU--?!!
IN MERCY'S NAME, CHILD--STOP!
TOO LATE FOR THAT, PROFESSOR.
AND THERE'S NO MORE MERCY WITHIN ME--
--THAN IN THE ONE I INTEND TO KILL.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, YOU WERE WITH PHOENIX IN SPIRIT-- AND EMPRESS LILANDRA AND THE STAR-JAMMERS IN THE FLESH--WHEN MY MOM CAME TO THIS PLACE TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE.

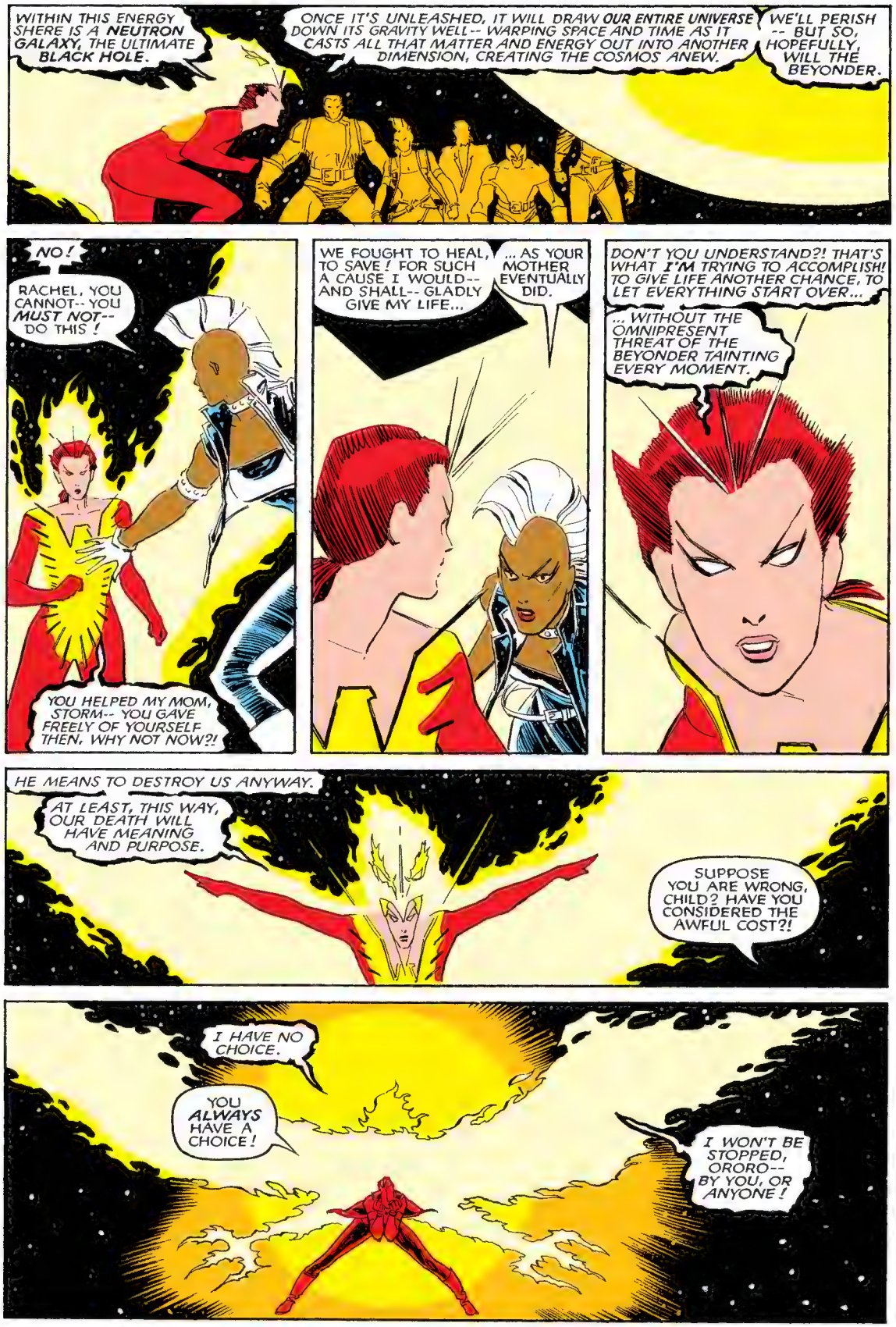
IT'S ONLY FAIR YOU BE WITH ME...
... WHEN I DESTROY IT.
THIS WORLD HAS NO NAME-- AND IT IS SO FAR FROM EVERYTHING THAT THE LIGHTS GLOWING IN ITS SKY ARE NOT INDIVIDUAL STARS BUT WHOLE GALAXIES.


LEGEND SAYS THIS WAS THE FIRST PLANET TO FORM-- AND BRING FORTH LIFE-- AFTER CREATION. WHATEVER RACE LIVED HERE HAS LONG-SINCE BEEN FORGOTTEN, ITS CITIES SILENT AND DESERTED SINCE BEFORE THE EARTH ITSELF WAS BORN.
ONLY ONE STRUCTURE HAS WITHSTOOD THE RAVAGES OF TIME--
--THE GREAT M'KRAAN CRYSTAL.


IN ALL THE AEONS, ITS GUARDIAN JAHF HAS FAILED IN HIS CHARGE TO KEEP THE CRYSTAL UNTOUCHED AND INVIOLATE ONLY ONCE--
--AGAINST THE X-MEN.
!?!

UNFORTUNATELY, HISTORY'S ABOUT TO REPEAT ITSELF.
ZAP!


BOSZHE MOI!
THE CITY WITHIN THE CRYSTAL.
IT-- SEEMS TO GO ON FOR-EVER!
TRUE, MAGNETO. AN INFINITE SPACE--THAT FEELS AS CRAMPED... OPPRESSIVE... DESOLATE AS A TOMB.
I HAD PRAYED NEVER TO SEE THIS PLACE AGAIN-- EVEN IN MY DARKEST DREAMS.
I WELCOME YOUR SPIRIT-FORMS, X-MEN, STAR-JAMMERS-- FRIENDS AND... FAMILY-- TO OUR FINEST HOUR.
I THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF YOUR LIFE- FORCES. I MEAN TO USE THEM WELL.


WITHIN THIS ENERGY SHERE IS A NEUTRON GALAXY, THE ULTIMATE BLACK HOLE.
ONCE IT'S UNLEASHED, IT WILL DRAW OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE DOWN ITS GRAVITY WELL-- WARPING SPACE AND TIME AS IT CASTS ALL THAT MATTER AND ENERGY OUT INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION, CREATING THE COSMOS ANEW.
WE'LL PERISH -- BUT SO, HOPEFULLY, WILL THE BEYONDER.
NO!
RACHEL, YOU CANNOT-- YOU MUST NOT-- DO THIS!
YOU HELPED MY MOM, STORM-- YOU GAVE FREELY OF YOURSELF THEN. WHY NOT NOW?!
WE FOUGHT TO HEAL, TO SAVE! FOR SUCH A CAUSE I WOULD-- AND SHALL-- GLADLY GIVE MY LIFE...
... AS YOUR MOTHER EVENTUALLY DID.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?! THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH! TO GIVE LIFE ANOTHER CHANCE, TO LET EVERYTHING START OVER...
... WITHOUT THE OMNIPRESENT THREAT OF THE BEYONDER TAINTING EVERY MOMENT.
HE MEANS TO DESTROY US ANYWAY.
AT LEAST, THIS WAY, OUR DEATH WILL HAVE MEANING AND PURPOSE.
SUPPOSE YOU ARE WRONG, CHILD? HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE AWFUL COST?!
I HAVE NO CHOICE.
YOU ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE!
I WON'T BE STOPPED, ORORO-- BY YOU, OR ANYONE!

AT FIRST, SHE DISCOVERS DARKNESS-- ABSOLUTE, STYGIAN, IMPENETRABLE.

IT IS HERSELF-- THE SHADOW OF REALITY--

--ABLE TO PERCEIVE NOTHING BEYOND THAT SELF...

... FOR WHAT IS NOT REAL DOES NOT EXIST AND THEREFORE CANNOT BE.

THEN, PROMPTING BOTH SURPRISE AND AWE, SHE ESPIES LIGHT-- SPECKLING HER EBONY SELF LIKE FIREFLIES IN THE NIGHT. THE BRIGHTEST ARE STARS: OLD YOUNG FIERCELY NEW-FORMED BARELY AGLOW HOT COOL SOME PROUD IN THEIR SPLENDID SOLITUDE OTHERS PROUDER STILL BECAUSE THEY NURTURE PLANETS.

EACH PLANET IS A LIGHT...

... AND EACH THING THAT LIVES UPON THAT PLANET--

--A MAD, CRAZY WONDROUS COLLAGE OF COLOR, WILDLY BEAUTIFUL, EVER-CHANGING--

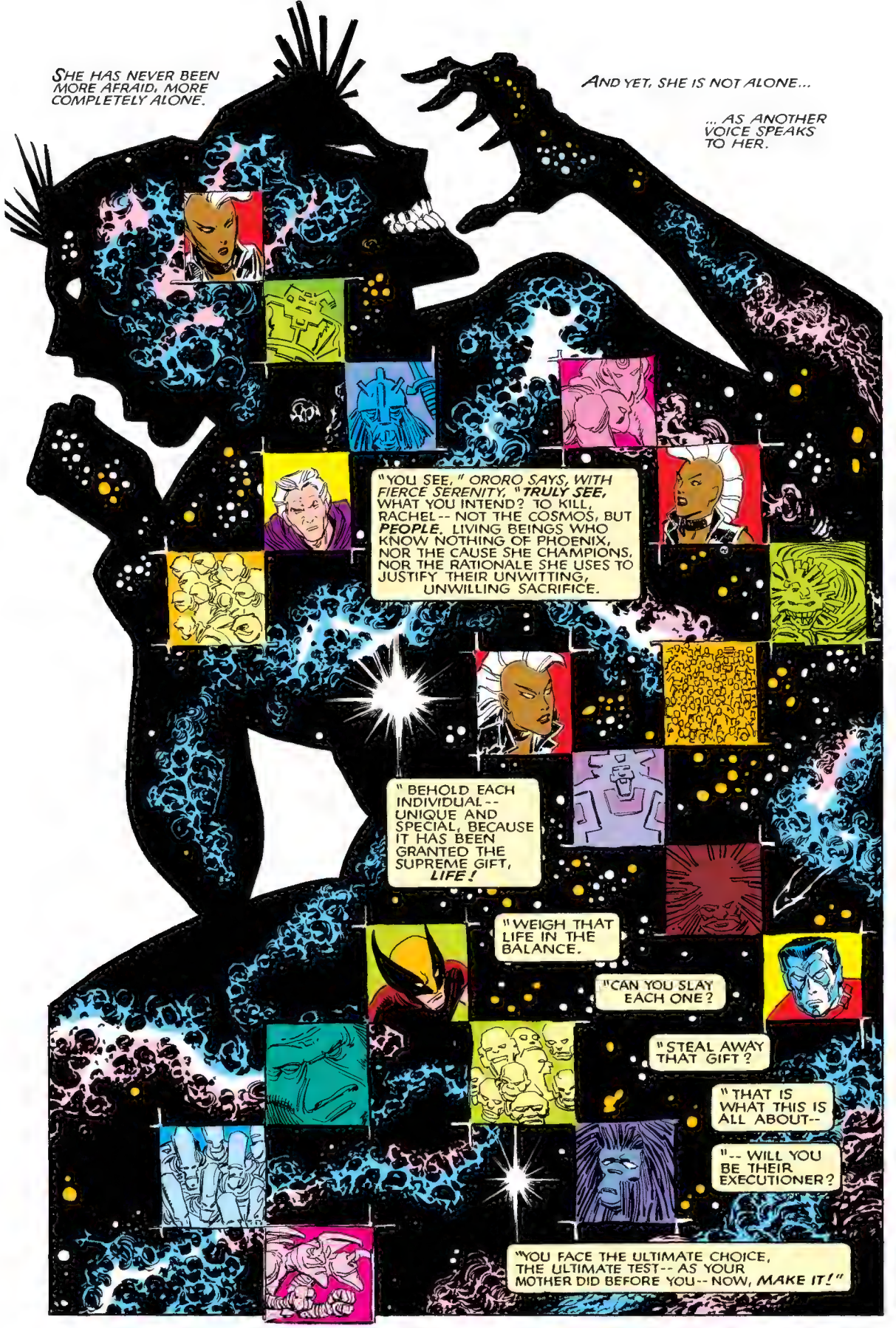
--RACES NEWLY BORN, OTHERS BREATHING THEIR LAST...

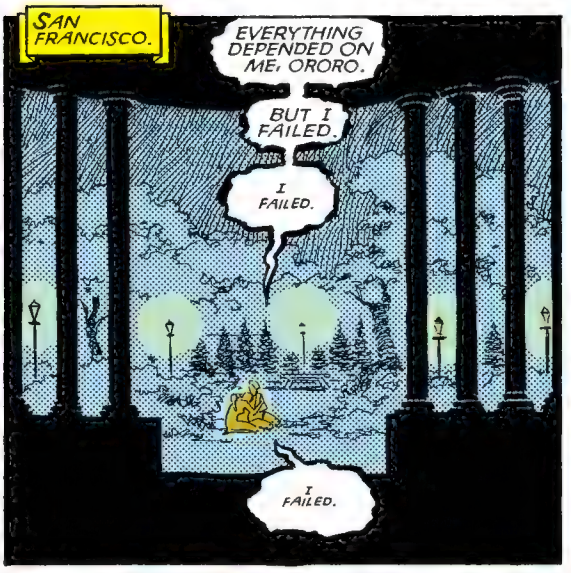
... ANIMALS AND SENTIENTS BEINGS RULED BY PASSION BY INTELLECT COMMITTING ACTS MAGNIFICENT AND AWFUL GLORIOUS AND OBSCENE...

... SAVAGE TRIBES CIVILIZED SOCIETES WARRIORS AESTHETES OPPRESSED OPPRESSORS THE BEST THE WORST WHO LOVE HATE CREATE SMASH SLAY ARE SLAIN...

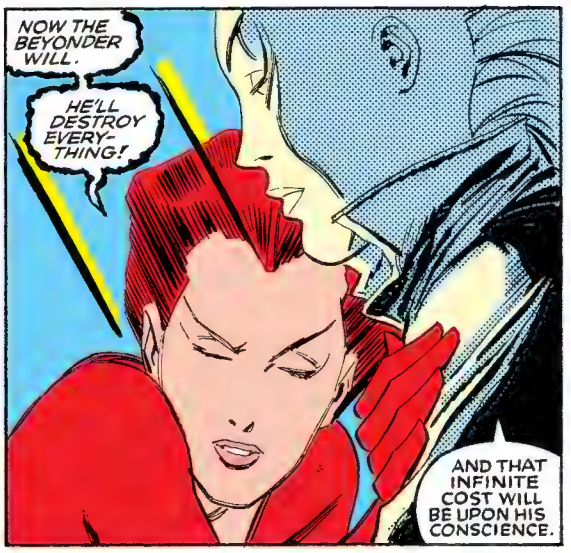
IMPOSSIBLY, SHE TOUCHES EVERY ONE--

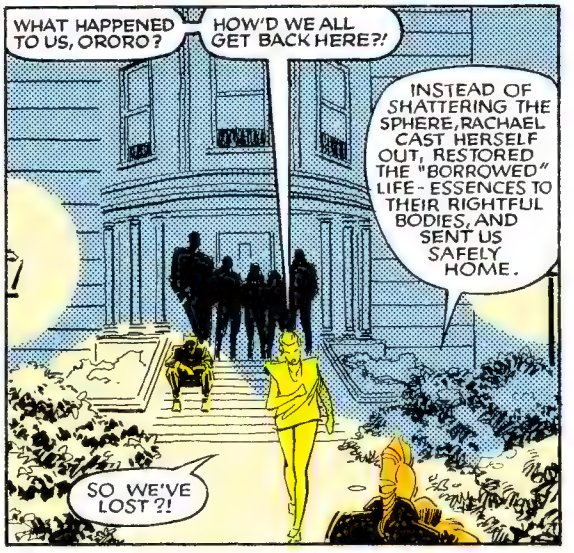
--REGARDLESS OF HOW GREAT OR SMALL--THEIR LIVES BECOME HERS. FOR THIS TIMELESS INSTANT, SHE EXPERIENCES THEIR DREAMS, THEIR YEARNINGS, THEIR TERRORS-- ALL THEY WERE AND ARE AND HOPE TO BE-- THE TOTALITY OF THEIR BEINGS.

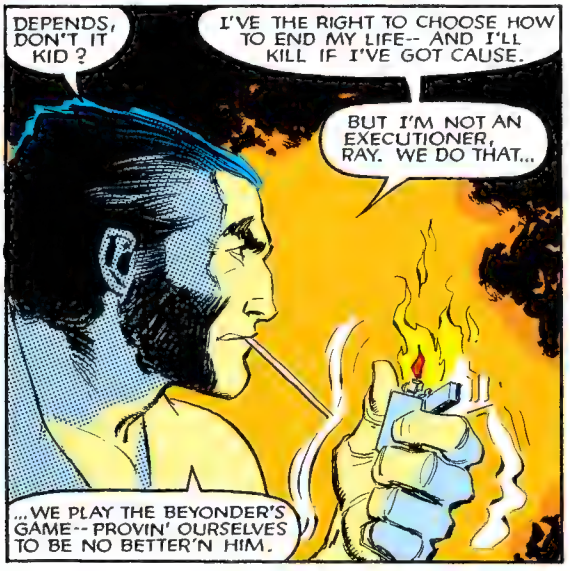

SHE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE AFRAID, MORE COMPLETELY ALONE.
AND YET, SHE IS NOT ALONE...
... AS ANOTHER VOICE SPEAKS TO HER.
"YOU SEE," ORORO SAYS, WITH FIERCE SERENITY, "TRULY SEE, WHAT YOU INTEND? TO KILL, RACHEL -- NOT THE COSMOS, BUT PEOPLE. LIVING BEINGS WHO KNOW NOTHING OF PHOENIX, NOR THE CAUSE SHE CHAMPIONS, NOR THE RATIONALE SHE USES TO JUSTIFY THEIR UNWITTING, UNWILLING SACRIFICE.
"BEHOLD EACH INDIVIDUAL -- UNIQUE AND SPECIAL, BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN GRANTED THE SUPREME GIFT, LIFE!
"WEIGH THAT LIFE IN THE BALANCE.
"CAN YOU SLAY EACH ONE?
"STEAL AWAY THAT GIFT?
"THAT IS WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT--
"-- WILL YOU BE THEIR EXECUTIONER?
"YOU FACE THE ULTIMATE CHOICE, THE ULTIMATE TEST -- AS YOUR MOTHER DID BEFORE YOU -- NOW, MAKE IT!"

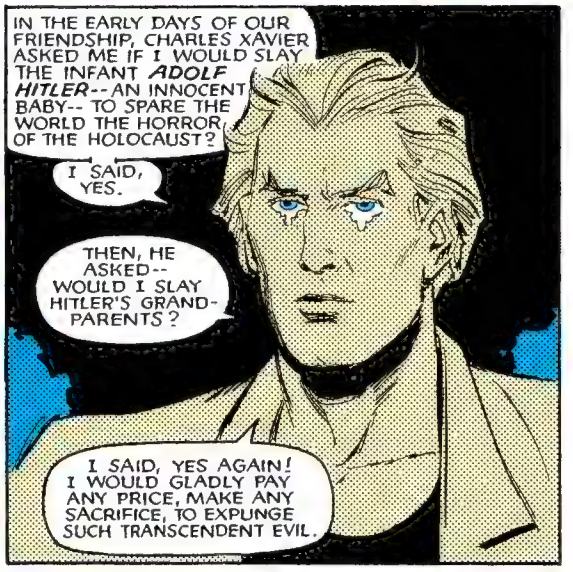

SAN FRANCISCO.
EVERYTHING DEPENDED ON ME, ORORO.
BUT I FAILED.
I FAILED.
I FAILED.

BECAUSE YOU COULD NOT KILL? BECAUSE YOU COULD NOT SLAUGHTER COUNTLESS INNOCENTS?
A STRANGE FAILURE, THAT.

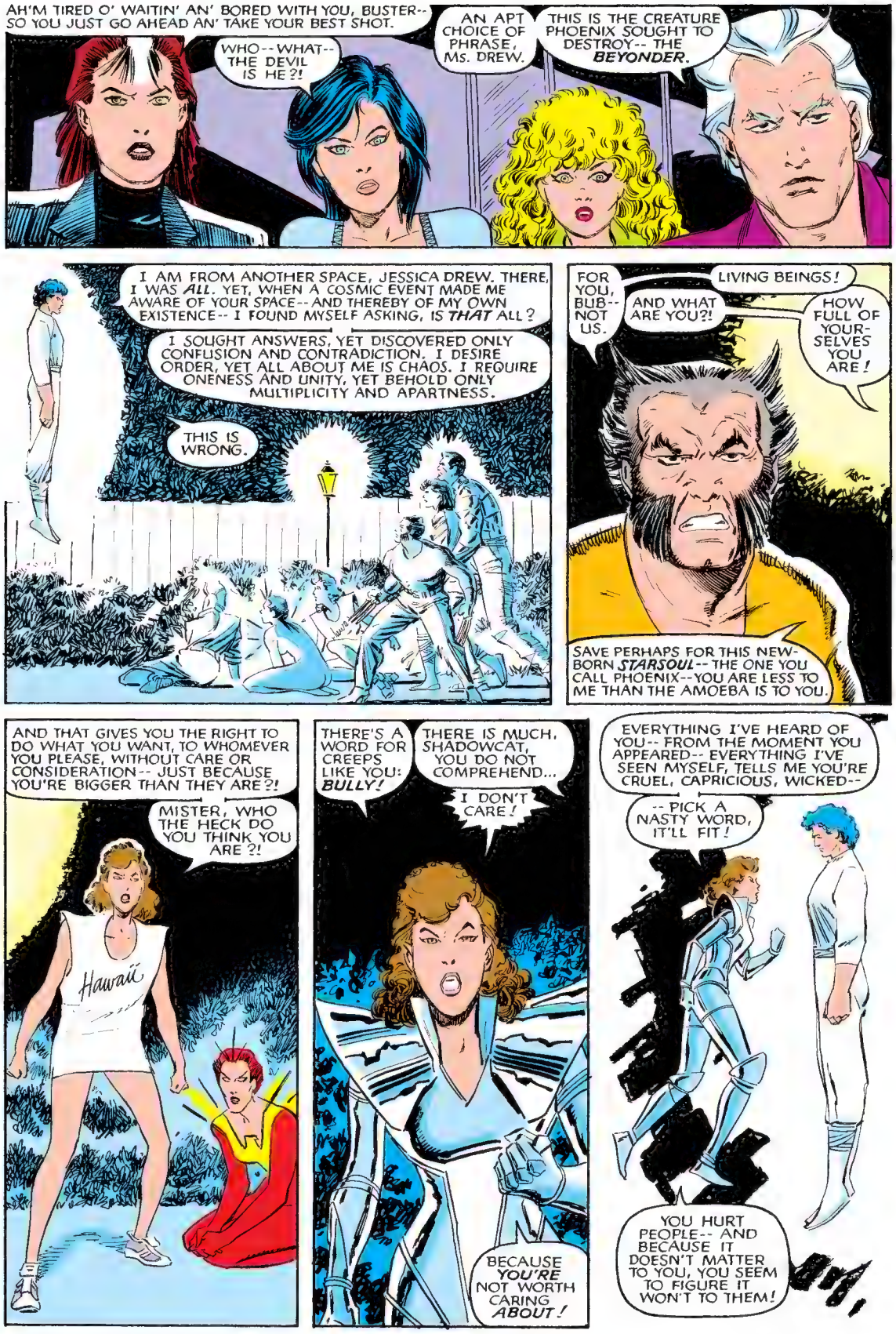

NOW THE BEYONDER WILL.
HE'LL DESTROY EVERY-THING!
AND THAT INFINITE COST WILL BE UPON HIS CONSCIENCE.

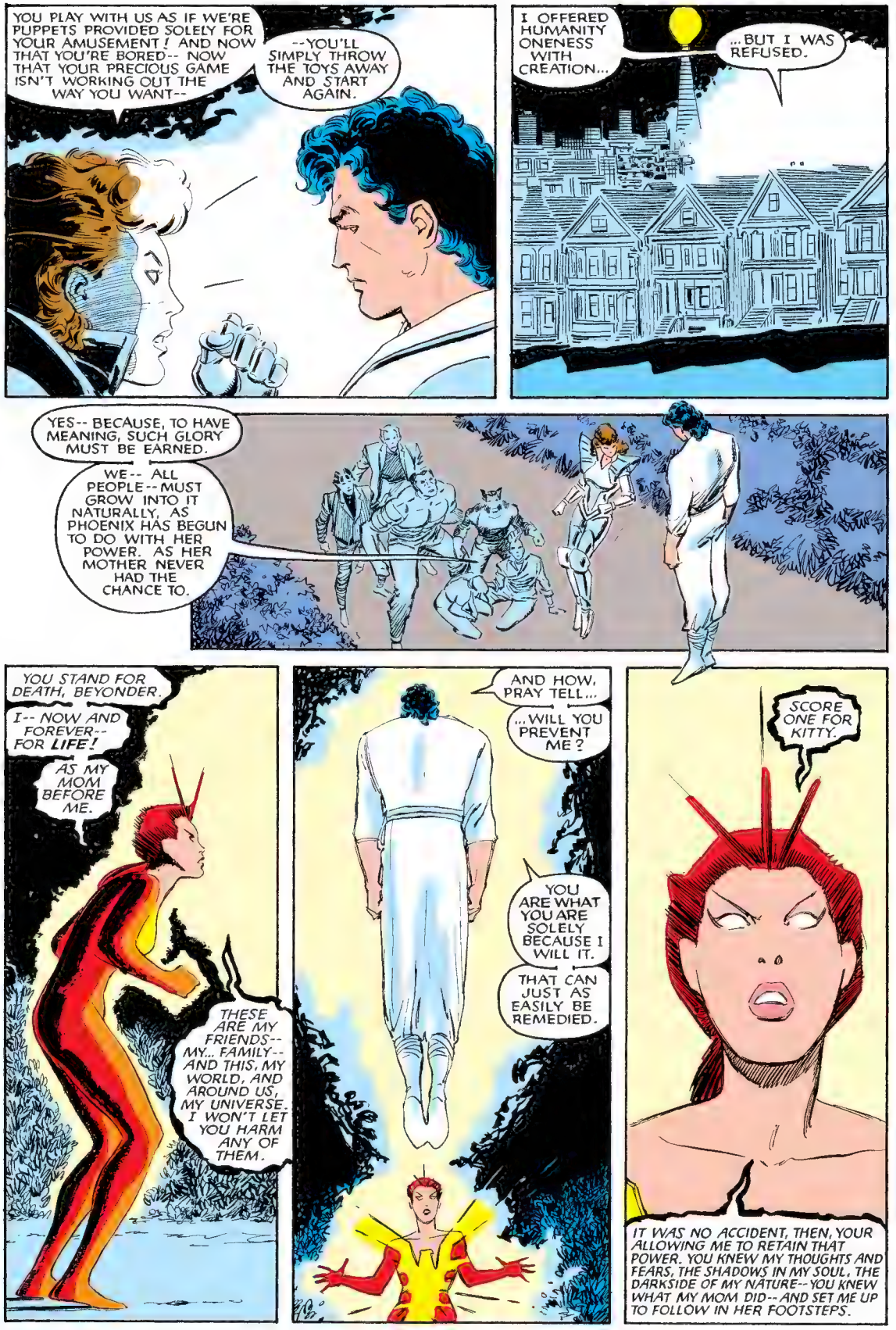

WHAT HAPPENED TO US, ORORO?
HOW'D WE ALL GET BACK HERE?!
INSTEAD OF SHATTERING THE SPHERE, RACHAEL CAST HERSELF OUT, RESTORED THE "BORROWED" LIFE-ESSENCES TO THEIR RIGHTFUL BODIES, AND SENT US SAFELY HOME.
SO WE'VE LOST?!

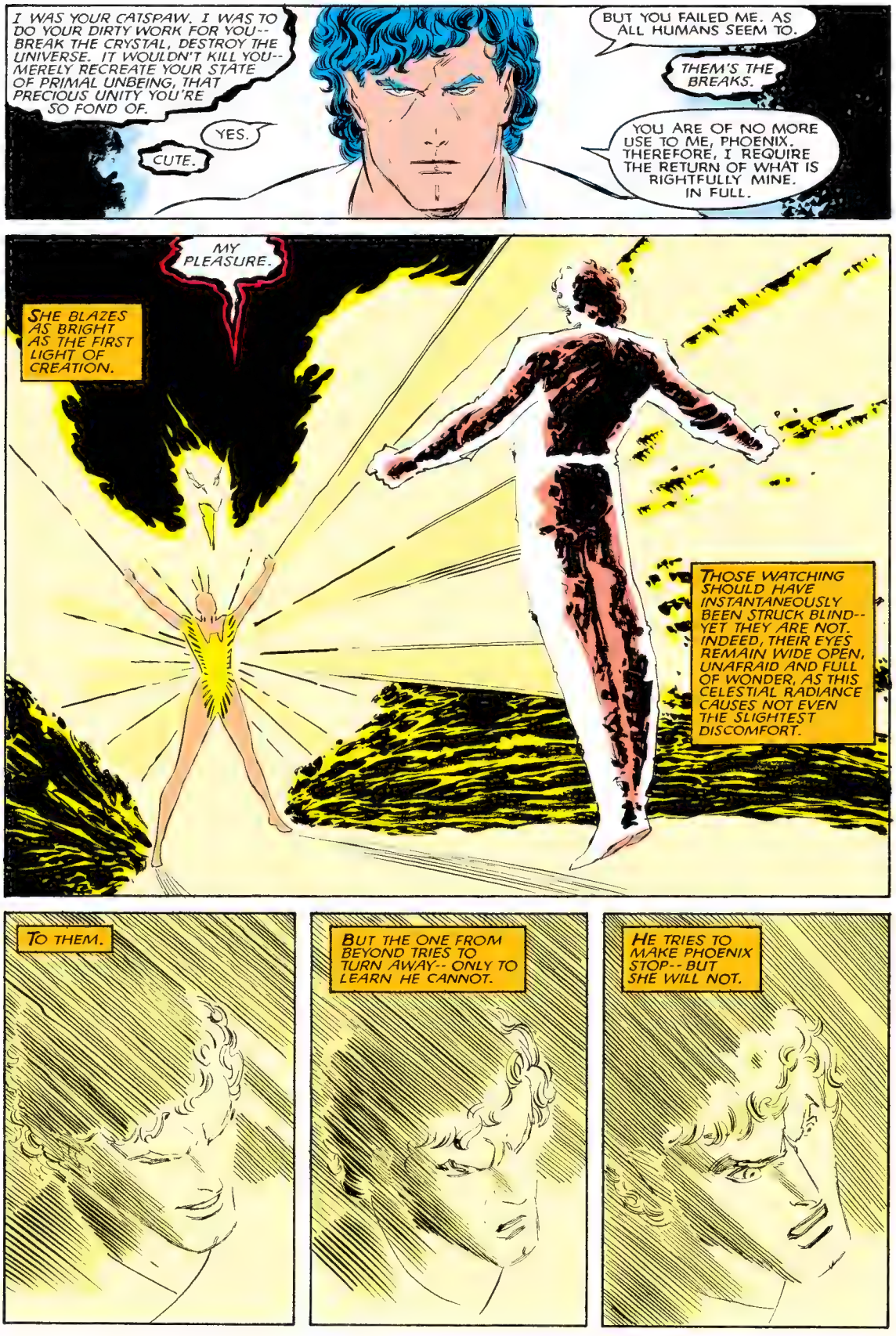

DEPENDS, DON'T IT KID?
I'VE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE HOW TO END MY LIFE-- AND I'LL KILL IF I'VE GOT CAUSE.
BUT I'M NOT AN EXECUTIONER, RAY. WE DO THAT...
...WE PLAY THE BEYONDER'S GAME-- PROVIN' OURSELVES TO BE NO BETTER'N HIM.

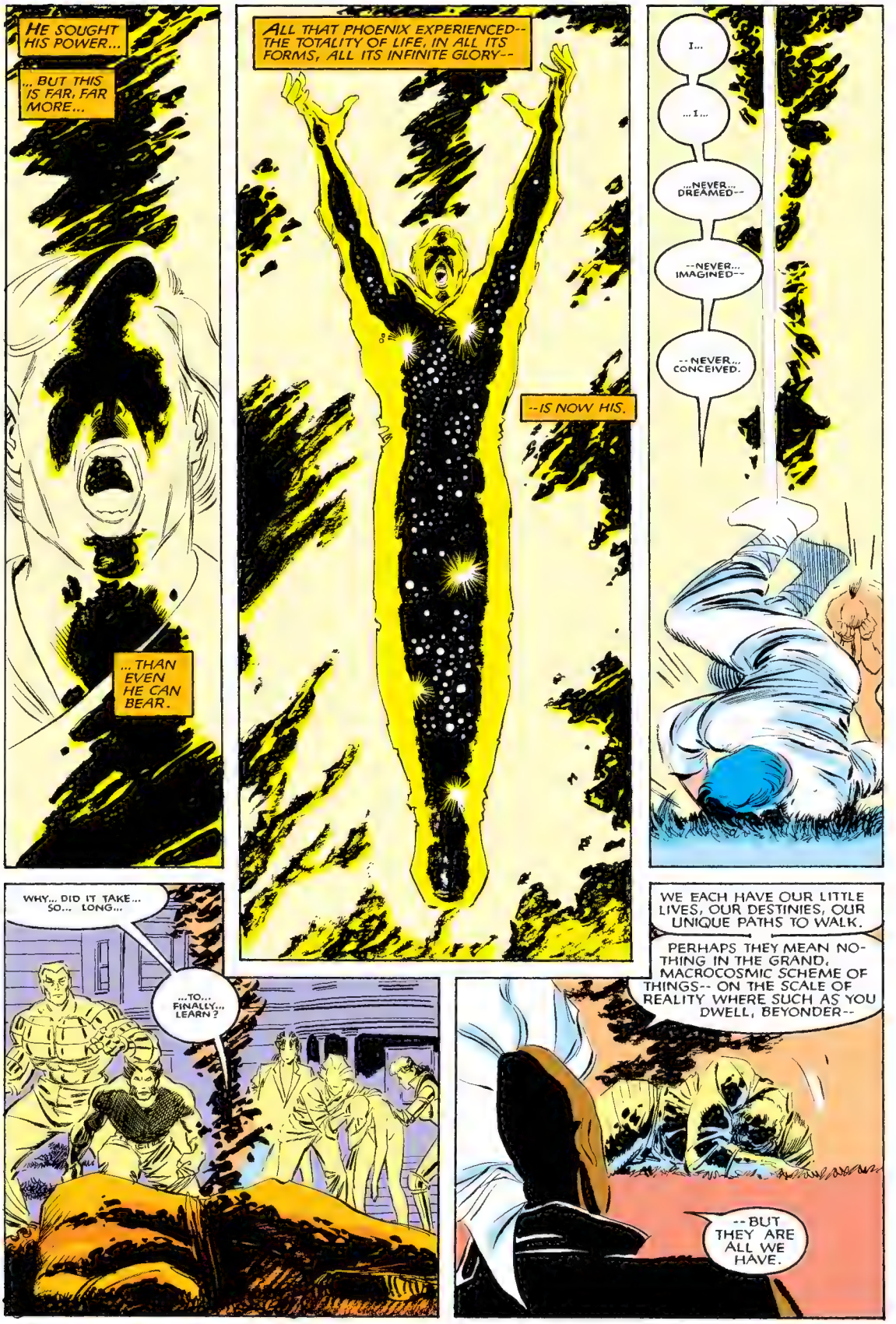

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP, CHARLES XAVIER ASKED ME IF I WOULD SLAY THE INFANT ADOLF HITLER--AN INNOCENT BABY-- TO SPARE THE WORLD THE HORROR OF THE HOLOCAUST?
I SAID, YES.
THEN, HE ASKED-- WOULD I SLAY HITLER'S GRAND-PARENTS?
I SAID, YES AGAIN! I WOULD GLADLY PAY ANY PRICE, MAKE ANY SACRIFICE, TO EXPUNGE SUCH TRANSCENDENT EVIL.

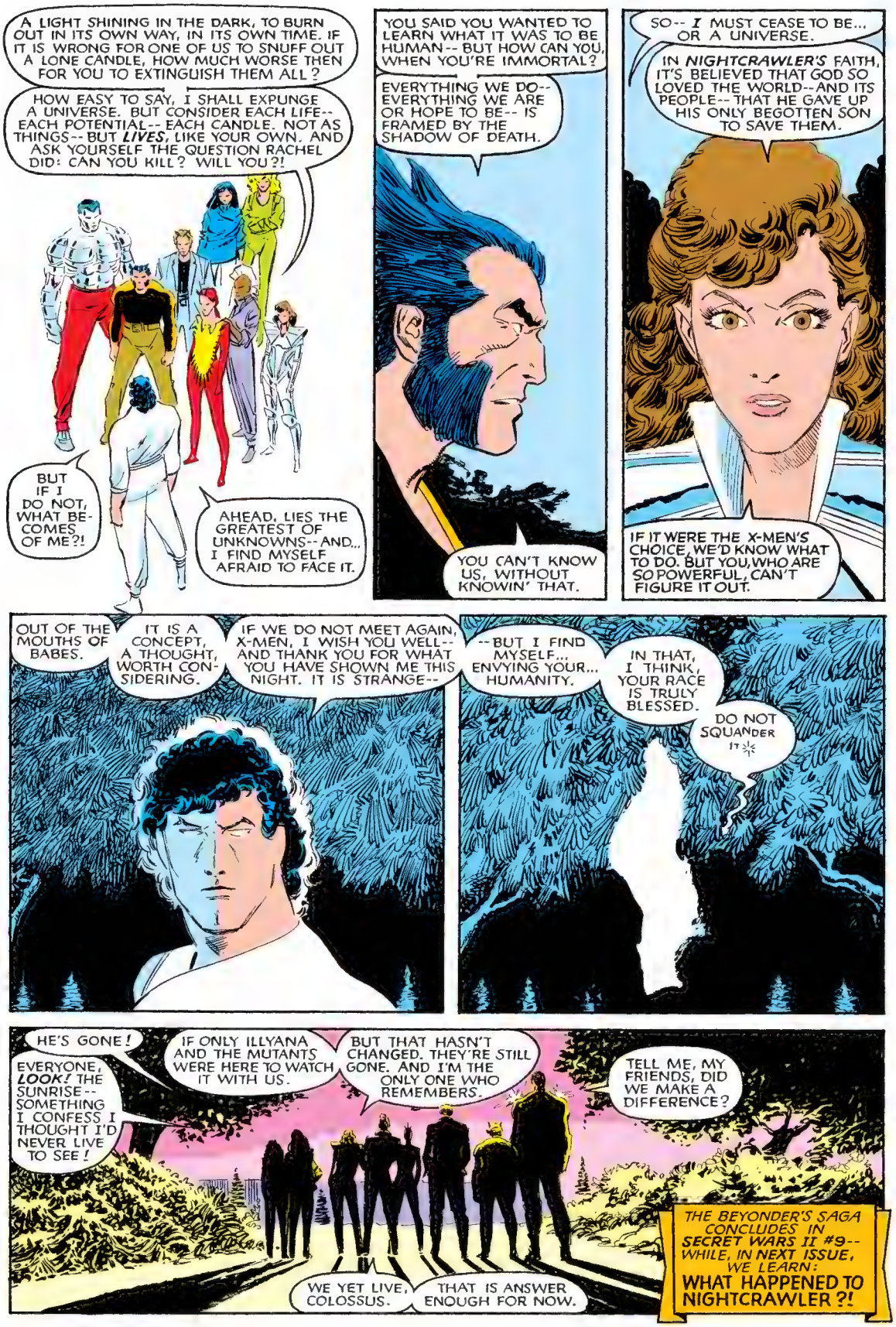
BUT NOW... I WONDER...?
I'M DISAPPOINTED, X-MEN.
THAT LIGHT--!
MAIN EVENT, COLOSSUS! ON YOUR TOES!!
I WISH I COULD SEE MY PARENTS IN RUSSIA, A FINAL TIME.
BEEN FUN, MARIKO, MY LOVE.
ALL WE'VE SEEN, ALL WE'VE DONE...
"... AN' IT DON'T MAKE A BIT O' DIFFERENCE."
THAT'S RIGHT, ROGUE.
I OFFERED YOU X-MEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO OUT WITH A TRULY SPECTACULAR BANG-- BUT YOU FLUBBED IT.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.
AS YOUR VILLAINS SOMETIMES SAY: IF YOU WANT A JOB DONE RIGHT...
... YOU HAVE TO DO IT YOURSELF.
WELL, HERE I AM.
THIS IS THE END OF YOUR ROAD, X-MEN. I HOPE YOU PLAN TO GO DOWN SWINGING-- NOT THAT YOU HAVE A PRAYER OF WINNING-- BUT I REALLY ENJOY A GOOD SCRAP.
IF NOT, I'LL TERMINATE YOU WHERE YOU STAND.

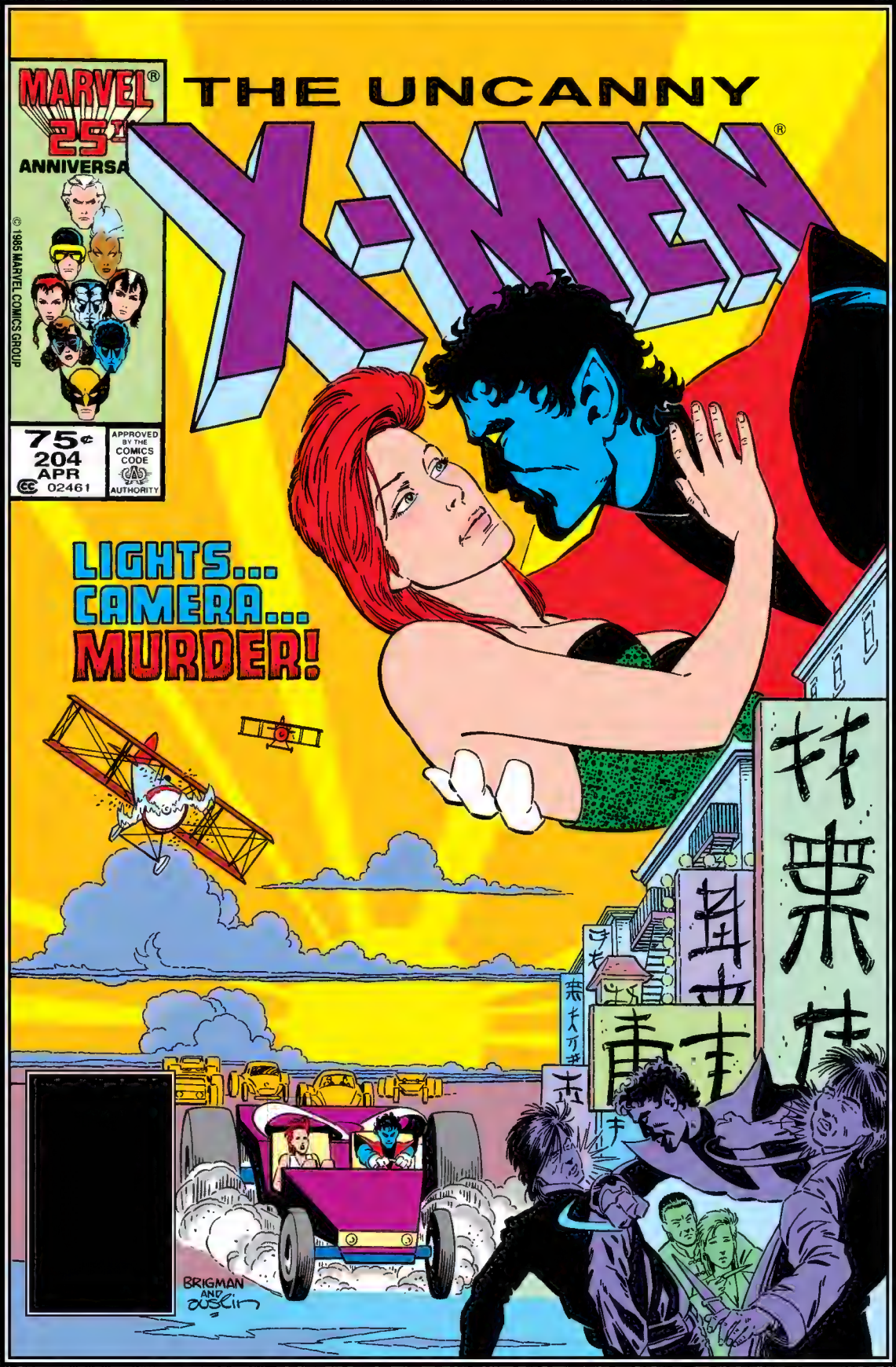

AH'M TIRED O' WAITIN' AN' BORED WITH YOU, BUSTER-- SO YOU JUST GO AHEAD AN' TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT.
WHO--WHAT-- THE DEVIL IS HE?!
AN APT CHOICE OF PHRASE, Ms. DREW.
THIS IS THE CREATURE PHOENIX SOUGHT TO DESTROY-- THE BEYONDER.
I AM FROM ANOTHER SPACE, JESSICA DREW. THERE, I WAS ALL. YET, WHEN A COSMIC EVENT MADE ME AWARE OF YOUR SPACE-- AND THEREBY OF MY OWN EXISTENCE-- I FOUND MYSELF ASKING, IS THAT ALL?
I SOUGHT ANSWERS, YET DISCOVERED ONLY CONFUSION AND CONTRADICTION. I DESIRE ORDER, YET ALL ABOUT ME IS CHAOS. I REQUIRE ONENESS AND UNITY, YET BEHOLD ONLY MULTIPLICITY AND APARTNESS.
THIS IS WRONG.
FOR YOU, BUB-- NOT US.
AND WHAT ARE YOU?!
LIVING BEINGS!
HOW FULL OF YOUR-SELVES YOU ARE!
SAVE PERHAPS FOR THIS NEW-BORN STARSOUL-- THE ONE YOU CALL PHOENIX--YOU ARE LESS TO ME THAN THE AMOEBA IS TO YOU.
AND THAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO DO WHAT YOU WANT, TO WHOMEVER YOU PLEASE, WITHOUT CARE OR CONSIDERATION-- JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE BIGGER THAN THEY ARE?!
MISTER, WHO THE HECK DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!
Hawaii
THERE'S A WORD FOR CREEPS LIKE YOU: BULLY!
THERE IS MUCH, SHADOWCAT, YOU DO NOT COMPREHEND...
I DON'T CARE!
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT WORTH CARING ABOUT!
EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD OF YOU-- FROM THE MOMENT YOU APPEARED-- EVERYTHING I'VE SEEN MYSELF, TELLS ME YOU'RE CRUEL, CAPRICIOUS, WICKED--
-- PICK A NASTY WORD, IT'LL FIT!
YOU HURT PEOPLE-- AND BECAUSE IT DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU, YOU SEEM TO FIGURE IT WON'T TO THEM!


YOU PLAY WITH US AS IF WE'RE PUPPETS PROVIDED SOLELY FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT! AND NOW THAT YOU'RE BORED-- NOW THAT YOUR PRECIOUS GAME ISN'T WORKING OUT THE WAY YOU WANT--
--YOU'LL SIMPLY THROW THE TOYS AWAY AND START AGAIN.
I OFFERED HUMANITY ONENESS WITH CREATION...
...BUT I WAS REFUSED.
YES-- BECAUSE, TO HAVE MEANING, SUCH GLORY MUST BE EARNED.
WE-- ALL PEOPLE--MUST GROW INTO IT NATURALLY, AS PHOENIX HAS BEGUN TO DO WITH HER POWER. AS HER MOTHER NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO.
YOU STAND FOR DEATH, BEYONDER.
I-- NOW AND FOREVER-- FOR LIFE!
AS MY MOM BEFORE ME.
THESE ARE MY FRIENDS-- MY... FAMILY-- AND THIS, MY WORLD, AND AROUND US, MY UNIVERSE. I WON'T LET YOU HARM ANY OF THEM.
AND HOW, PRAY TELL...
...WILL YOU PREVENT ME?
YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE SOLELY BECAUSE I WILL IT.
THAT CAN JUST AS EASILY BE REMEDIED.
SCORE ONE FOR KITTY.
IT WAS NO ACCIDENT, THEN, YOUR ALLOWING ME TO RETAIN THAT POWER. YOU KNEW MY THOUGHTS AND FEARS, THE SHADOWS IN MY SOUL, THE DARKSIDE OF MY NATURE-- YOU KNEW WHAT MY MOM DID-- AND SET ME UP TO FOLLOW IN HER FOOTSTEPS.


I WAS YOUR CATSPAW. I WAS TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK FOR YOU-- BREAK THE CRYSTAL, DESTROY THE UNIVERSE. IT WOULDN'T KILL YOU-- MERELY RECREATE YOUR STATE OF PRIMAL UNBEING, THAT PRECIOUS UNITY YOU'RE SO FOND OF.
YES.
CUTE.
BUT YOU FAILED ME. AS ALL HUMANS SEEM TO.
THEM'S THE BREAKS.
YOU ARE OF NO MORE USE TO ME, PHOENIX. THEREFORE, I REQUIRE THE RETURN OF WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE. IN FULL.
MY PLEASURE.
SHE BLAZES AS BRIGHT AS THE FIRST LIGHT OF CREATION.
THOSE WATCHING SHOULD HAVE INSTANTANEOUSLY BEEN STRUCK BLIND-- YET THEY ARE NOT. INDEED, THEIR EYES REMAIN WIDE OPEN, UNAFRAID AND FULL OF WONDER, AS THIS CELESTIAL RADIANCE CAUSES NOT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST DISCOMFORT.
TO THEM.
BUT THE ONE FROM BEYOND TRIES TO TURN AWAY-- ONLY TO LEARN HE CANNOT.
HE TRIES TO MAKE PHOENIX STOP-- BUT SHE WILL NOT.


HE SOUGHT HIS POWER...
...BUT THIS IS FAR, FAR MORE...
...THAN EVEN HE CAN BEAR.
ALL THAT PHOENIX EXPERIENCED-- THE TOTALITY OF LIFE, IN ALL ITS FORMS, ALL ITS INFINITE GLORY--
--IS NOW HIS.
I...
...I...
...NEVER... DREAMED--
--NEVER... IMAGINED--
--NEVER... CONCEIVED.
WHY... DID IT TAKE... SO... LONG...
...TO... FINALLY... LEARN?
WE EACH HAVE OUR LITTLE LIVES, OUR DESTINIES, OUR UNIQUE PATHS TO WALK.
PERHAPS THEY MEAN NOTHING IN THE GRAND, MACROCOSMIC SCHEME OF THINGS-- ON THE SCALE OF REALITY WHERE SUCH AS YOU DWELL, BEYONDER--
--BUT THEY ARE ALL WE HAVE.


A LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARK, TO BURN OUT IN ITS OWN WAY, IN ITS OWN TIME. IF IT IS WRONG FOR ONE OF US TO SNUFF OUT A LONE CANDLE, HOW MUCH WORSE THEN FOR YOU TO EXTINGUISH THEM ALL?
HOW EASY TO SAY, I SHALL EXPUNGE A UNIVERSE. BUT CONSIDER EACH LIFE-- EACH POTENTIAL-- EACH CANDLE. NOT AS THINGS-- BUT LIVES, LIKE YOUR OWN. AND ASK YOURSELF THE QUESTION RACHEL DID: CAN YOU KILL? WILL YOU?!
BUT IF I DO NOT, WHAT BECOMES OF ME?!
AHEAD, LIES THE GREATEST OF UNKNOWNS-- AND... I FIND MYSELF AFRAID TO FACE IT.
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO LEARN WHAT IT WAS TO BE HUMAN-- BUT HOW CAN YOU, WHEN YOU'RE IMMORTAL?
EVERYTHING WE DO-- EVERYTHING WE ARE OR HOPE TO BE-- IS FRAMED BY THE SHADOW OF DEATH.
YOU CAN'T KNOW US, WITHOUT KNOWIN' THAT.
SO-- I MUST CEASE TO BE... OR A UNIVERSE.
IN NIGHTCRAWLER'S FAITH, IT'S BELIEVED THAT GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD--AND ITS PEOPLE-- THAT HE GAVE UP HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON TO SAVE THEM.
IF IT WERE THE X-MEN'S CHOICE, WE'D KNOW WHAT TO DO. BUT YOU, WHO ARE SO POWERFUL, CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.
OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES.
IT IS A CONCEPT, A THOUGHT, WORTH CONSIDERING.
IF WE DO NOT MEET AGAIN, X-MEN, I WISH YOU WELL-- AND THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THIS NIGHT. IT IS STRANGE--
--BUT I FIND MYSELF... ENVYING YOUR... HUMANITY.
IN THAT, I THINK, YOUR RACE IS TRULY BLESSED.
DO NOT SQUANDER IT.
HE'S GONE!
EVERYONE, LOOK! THE SUNRISE-- SOMETHING I CONFESS I THOUGHT I'D NEVER LIVE TO SEE!
IF ONLY ILLYANA AND THE MUTANTS WERE HERE TO WATCH IT WITH US.
BUT THAT HASN'T CHANGED. THEY'RE STILL GONE. AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERS.
TELL ME, MY FRIENDS, DID WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
WE YET LIVE, COLOSSUS.
THAT IS ANSWER ENOUGH FOR NOW.
THE BEYONDER'S SAGA CONCLUDES IN SECRET WARS II #9-- WHILE, IN NEXT ISSUE, WE LEARN:
WHAT HAPPENED TO NIGHTCRAWLER?!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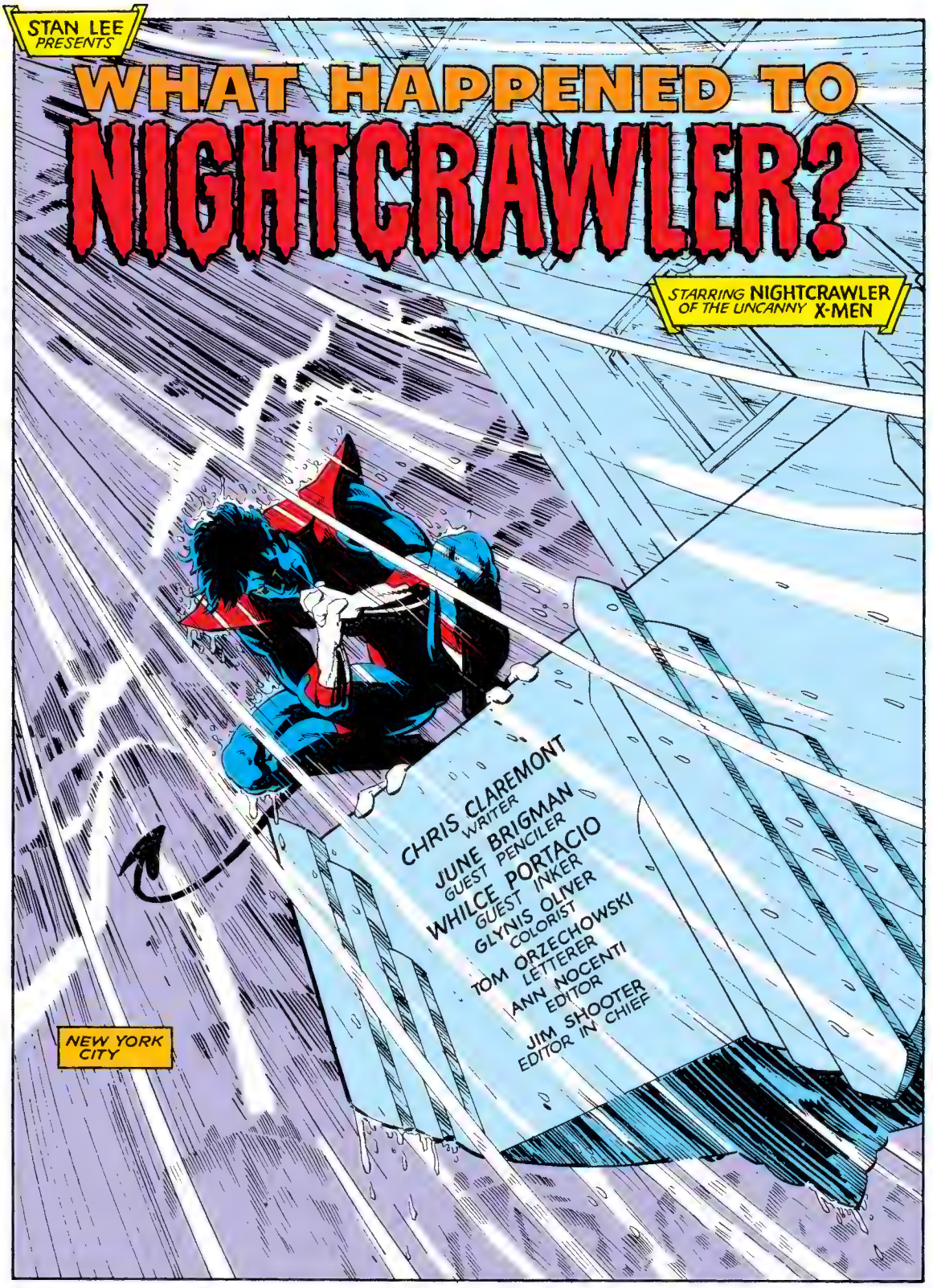
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
LIGHTS...
CAMERA...
MURDER!
BRIGMAN AND


STAN LEE PRESENTS
WHAT HAPPENED TO
NIGHTCRAWLER?
STARRING NIGHTCRAWLER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN
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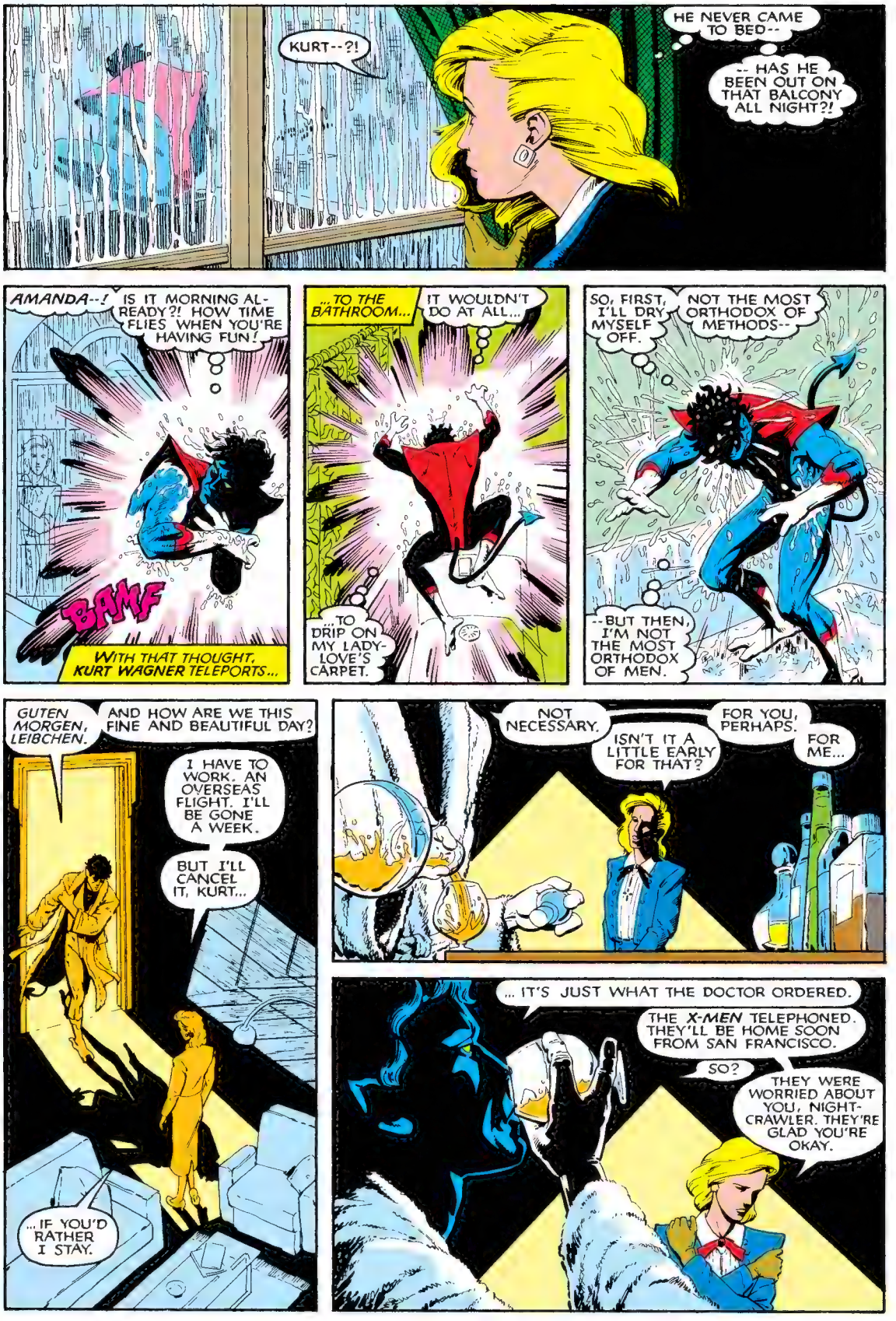
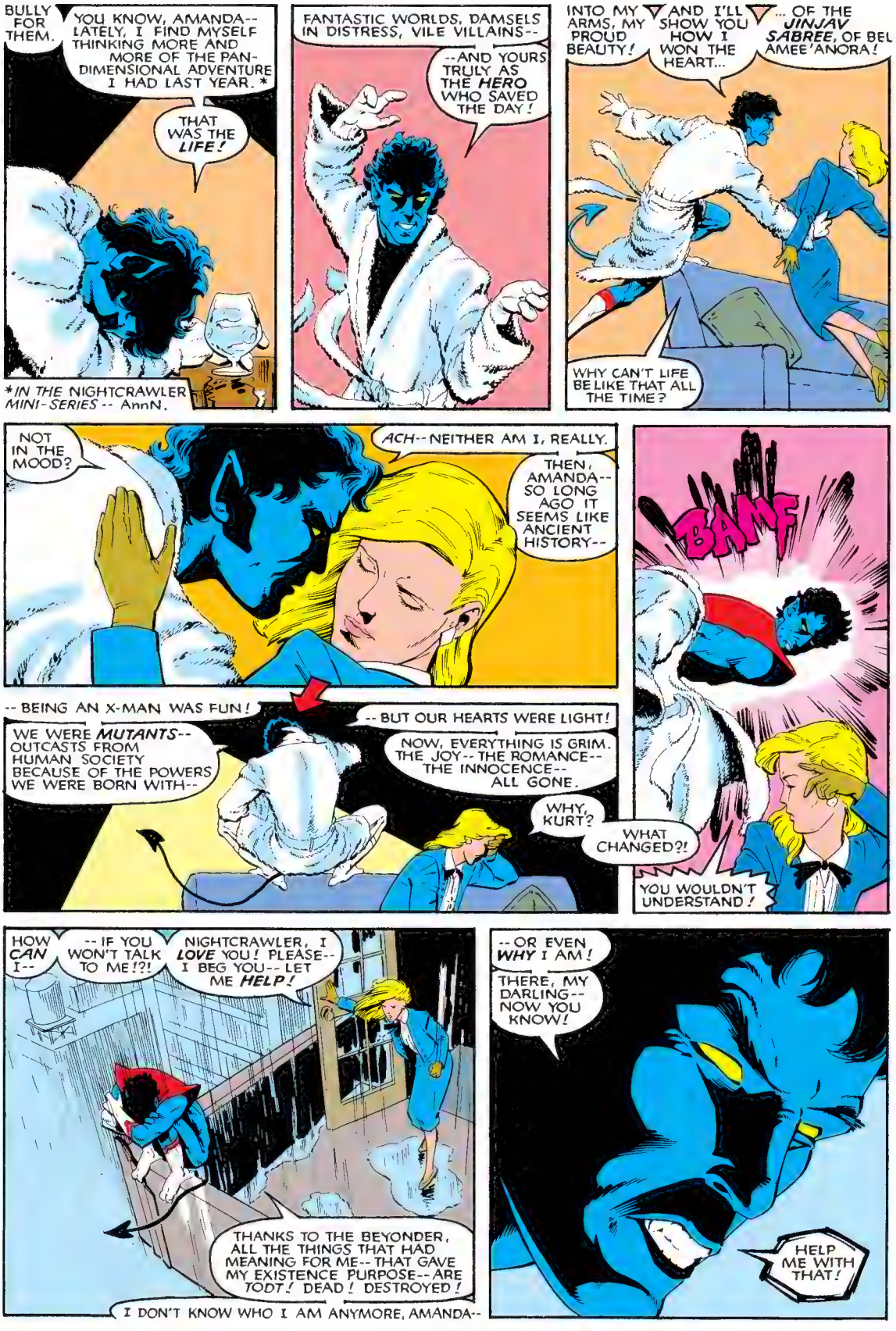
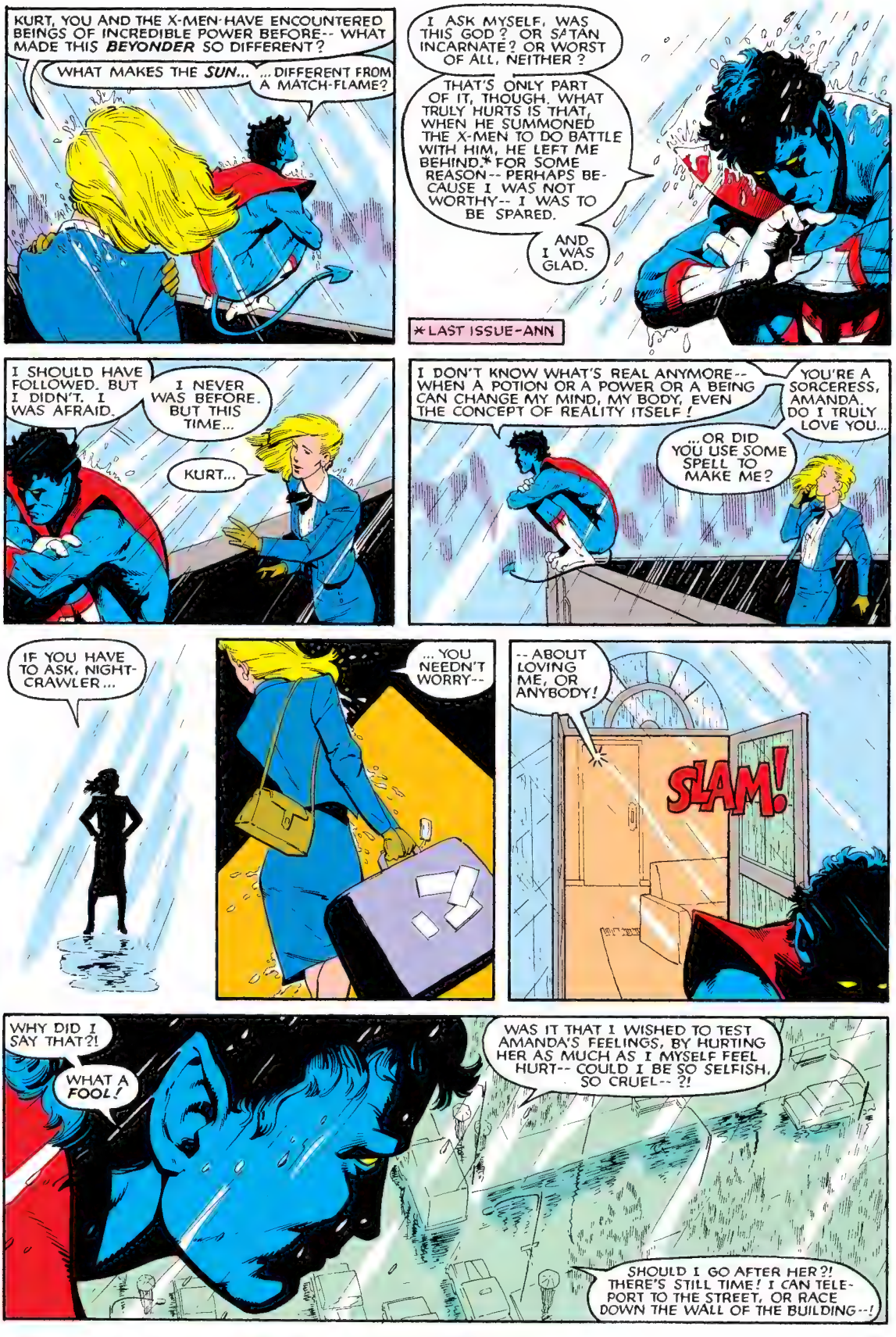
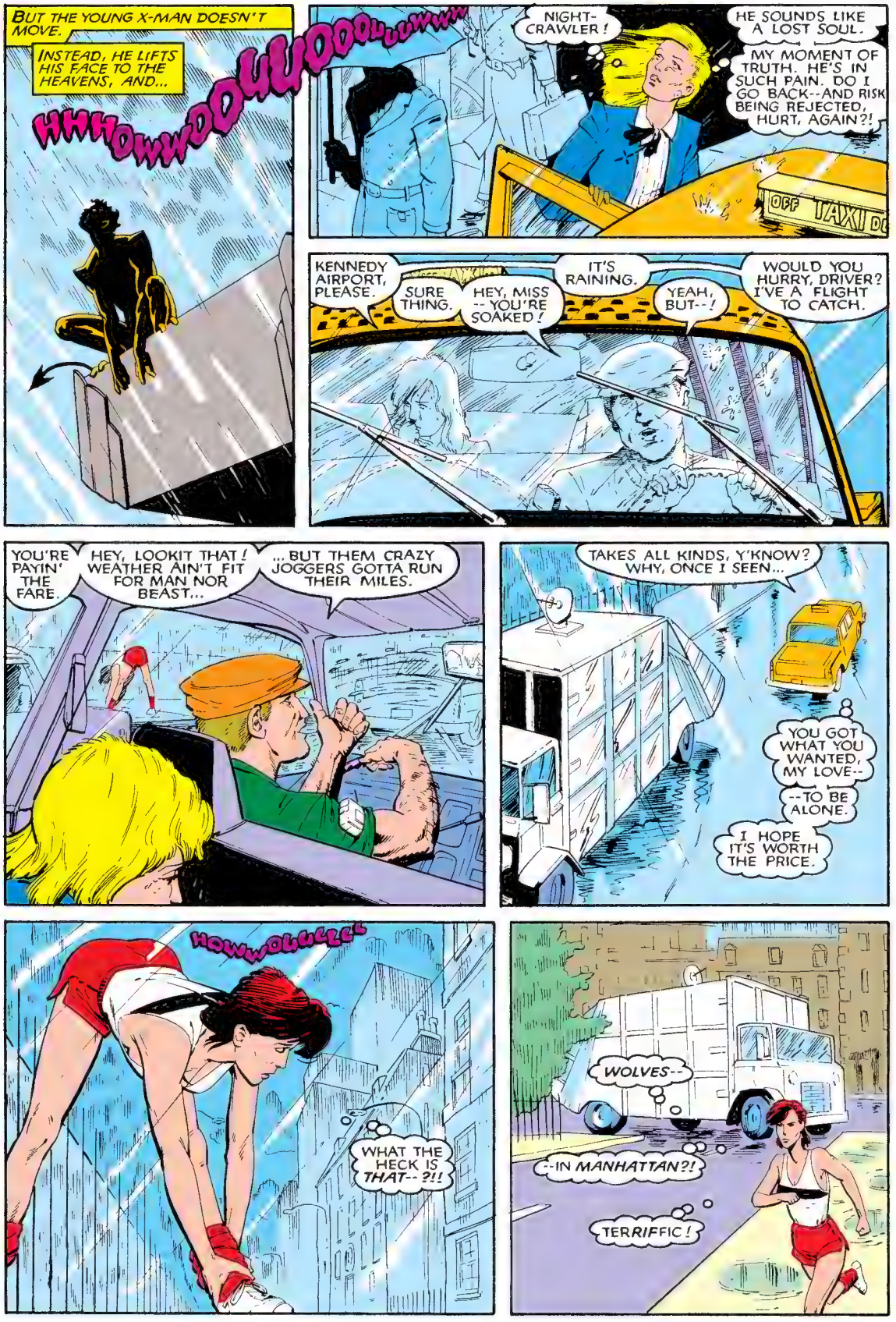
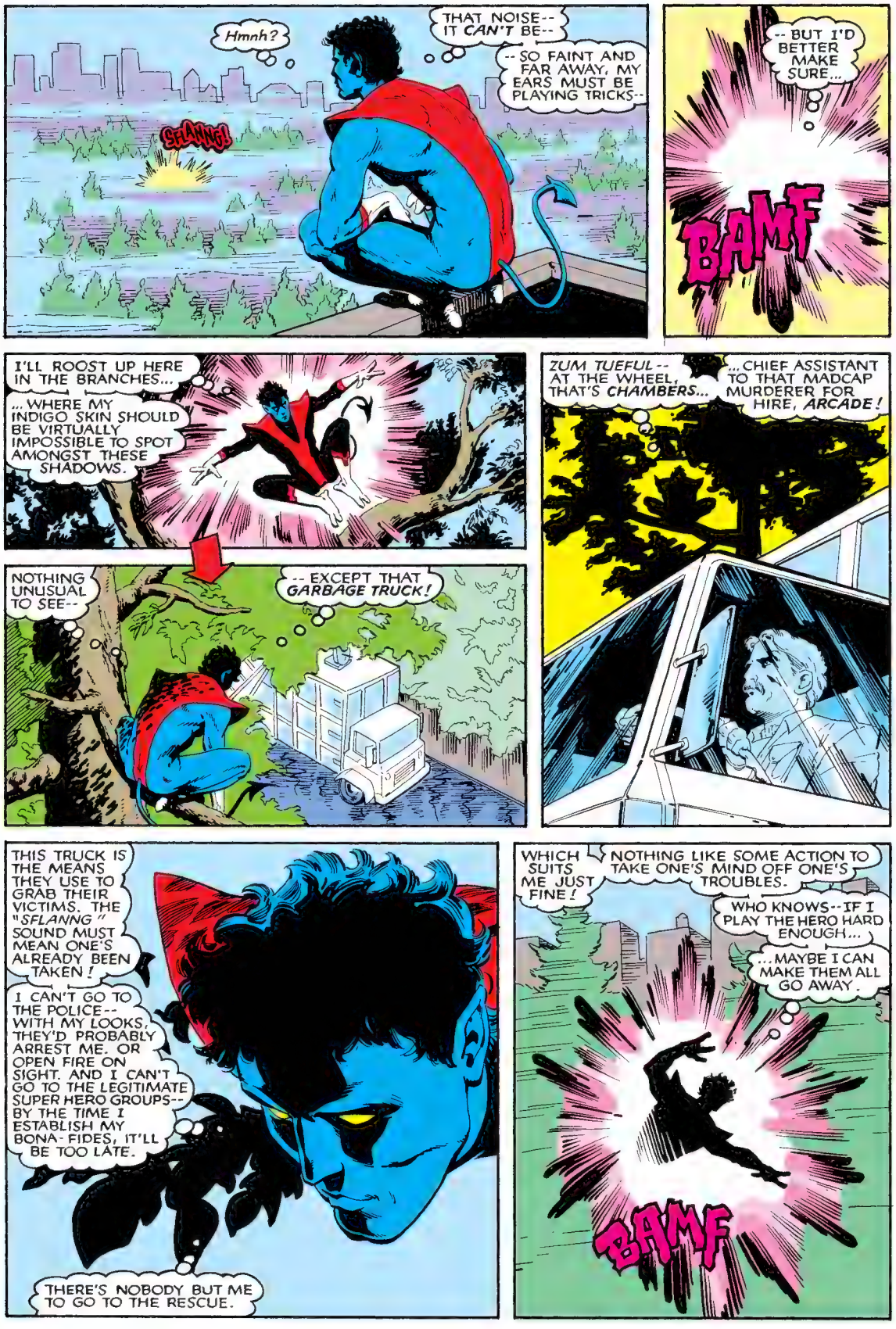
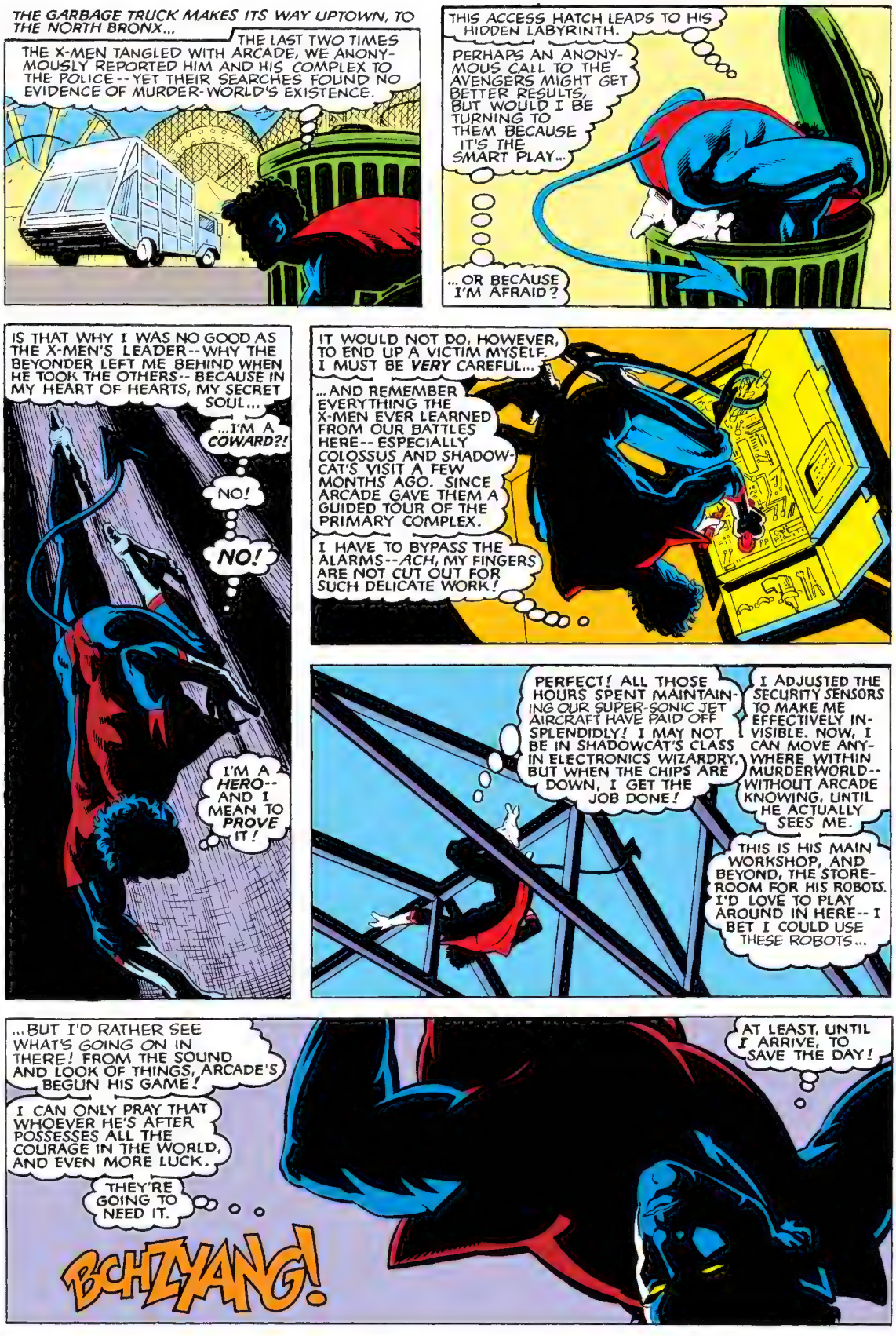

KURT--?!
HE NEVER CAME TO BED--
-- HAS HE BEEN OUT ON THAT BALCONY ALL NIGHT?!
AMANDA--!
IS IT MORNING ALREADY?! HOW TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN!
BAMF
WITH THAT THOUGHT, KURT WAGNER TELEPORTS...
...TO THE BATHROOM...
IT WOULDN'T DO AT ALL...
...TO DRIP ON MY LADY-LOVE'S CARPET.
SO, FIRST, I'LL DRY MYSELF OFF.
NOT THE MOST ORTHODOX OF METHODS--
--BUT THEN, I'M NOT THE MOST ORTHODOX OF MEN.
GUTEN MORGEN, LEIBCHEN.
AND HOW ARE WE THIS FINE AND BEAUTIFUL DAY?
I HAVE TO WORK. AN OVERSEAS FLIGHT. I'LL BE GONE A WEEK.
BUT I'LL CANCEL IT, KURT...
...IF YOU'D RATHER I STAY.
NOT NECESSARY.
ISN'T IT A LITTLE EARLY FOR THAT?
FOR YOU, PERHAPS.
FOR ME...
... IT'S JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.
THE X-MEN TELEPHONED. THEY'LL BE HOME SOON FROM SAN FRANCISCO.
SO?
THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT YOU, NIGHTCRAWLER. THEY'RE GLAD YOU'RE OKAY.


BULLY FOR THEM.
YOU KNOW, AMANDA-- LATELY, I FIND MYSELF THINKING MORE AND MORE OF THE PAN-DIMENSIONAL ADVENTURE I HAD LAST YEAR. *
THAT WAS THE LIFE!
*IN THE NIGHTCRAWLER MINI-SERIES -- AnnN.
FANTASTIC WORLDS, DAMSELS IN DISTRESS, VILE VILLAINS--
--AND YOURS TRULY AS THE HERO WHO SAVED THE DAY!
INTO MY ARMS, MY PROUD BEAUTY!
AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW I WON THE HEART...
... OF THE JINJAV SABREE, OF BEL AMEE'ANORA!
WHY CAN'T LIFE BE LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME?
NOT IN THE MOOD?
ACH-- NEITHER AM I, REALLY.
THEN, AMANDA-- SO LONG AGO IT SEEMS LIKE ANCIENT HISTORY--
BAMF
-- BEING AN X-MAN WAS FUN!
WE WERE MUTANTS-- OUTCASTS FROM HUMAN SOCIETY BECAUSE OF THE POWERS WE WERE BORN WITH--
-- BUT OUR HEARTS WERE LIGHT!
NOW, EVERYTHING IS GRIM. THE JOY-- THE ROMANCE-- THE INNOCENCE-- ALL GONE.
WHY, KURT?
WHAT CHANGED?!
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!
HOW CAN I--
-- IF YOU WON'T TALK TO ME!?!
NIGHTCRAWLER, I LOVE YOU! PLEASE-- I BEG YOU-- LET ME HELP!
THANKS TO THE BEYONDER, ALL THE THINGS THAT HAD MEANING FOR ME-- THAT GAVE MY EXISTENCE PURPOSE-- ARE TODT! DEAD! DESTROYED!
I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE, AMANDA--
-- OR EVEN WHY I AM!
THERE, MY DARLING-- NOW YOU KNOW!
HELP ME WITH THAT!

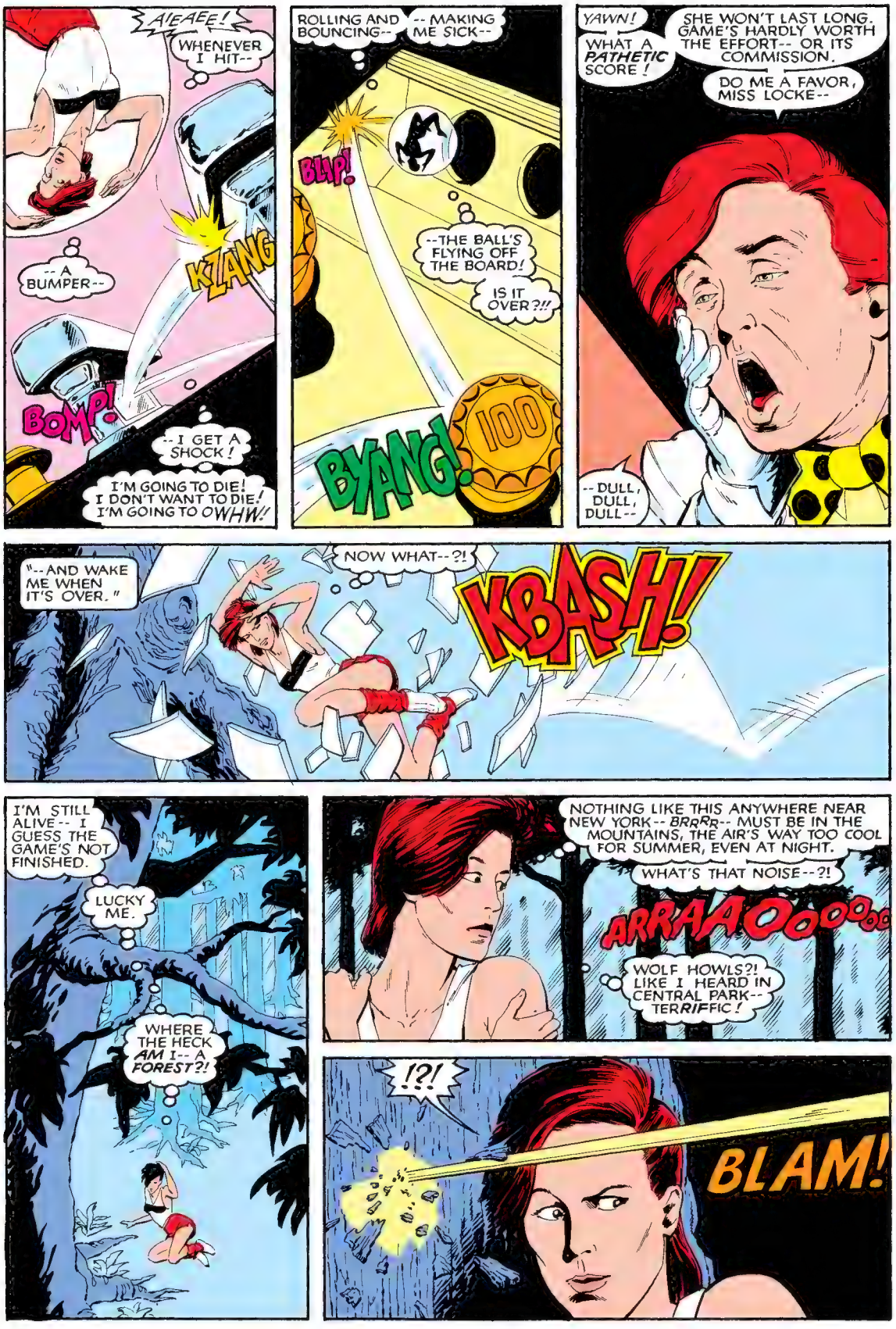

KURT, YOU AND THE X-MEN HAVE ENCOUNTERED BEINGS OF INCREDIBLE POWER BEFORE-- WHAT MADE THIS BEYONDER SO DIFFERENT?
WHAT MAKES THE SUN... ...DIFFERENT FROM A MATCH-FLAME?
I ASK MYSELF, WAS THIS GOD? OR SATAN INCARNATE? OR WORST OF ALL, NEITHER?
THAT'S ONLY PART OF IT, THOUGH. WHAT TRULY HURTS IS THAT, WHEN HE SUMMONED THE X-MEN TO DO BATTLE WITH HIM, HE LEFT ME BEHIND.* FOR SOME REASON-- PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS NOT WORTHY-- I WAS TO BE SPARED.
AND I WAS GLAD.
*LAST ISSUE-ANN
I SHOULD HAVE FOLLOWED. BUT I DIDN'T. I WAS AFRAID.
I NEVER WAS BEFORE. BUT THIS TIME...
KURT...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REAL ANYMORE-- WHEN A POTION OR A POWER OR A BEING CAN CHANGE MY MIND, MY BODY, EVEN THE CONCEPT OF REALITY ITSELF!
YOU'RE A SORCERESS, AMANDA. DO I TRULY LOVE YOU...
...OR DID YOU USE SOME SPELL TO MAKE ME?
IF YOU HAVE TO ASK, NIGHTCRAWLER...
...YOU NEEDN'T WORRY--
--ABOUT LOVING ME, OR ANYBODY!
SLAM!
WHY DID I SAY THAT?!
WHAT A FOOL!
WAS IT THAT I WISHED TO TEST AMANDA'S FEELINGS, BY HURTING HER AS MUCH AS I MYSELF FEEL HURT-- COULD I BE SO SELFISH, SO CRUEL-- ?!
SHOULD I GO AFTER HER?! THERE'S STILL TIME! I CAN TELEPORT TO THE STREET, OR RACE DOWN THE WALL OF THE BUILDING--!

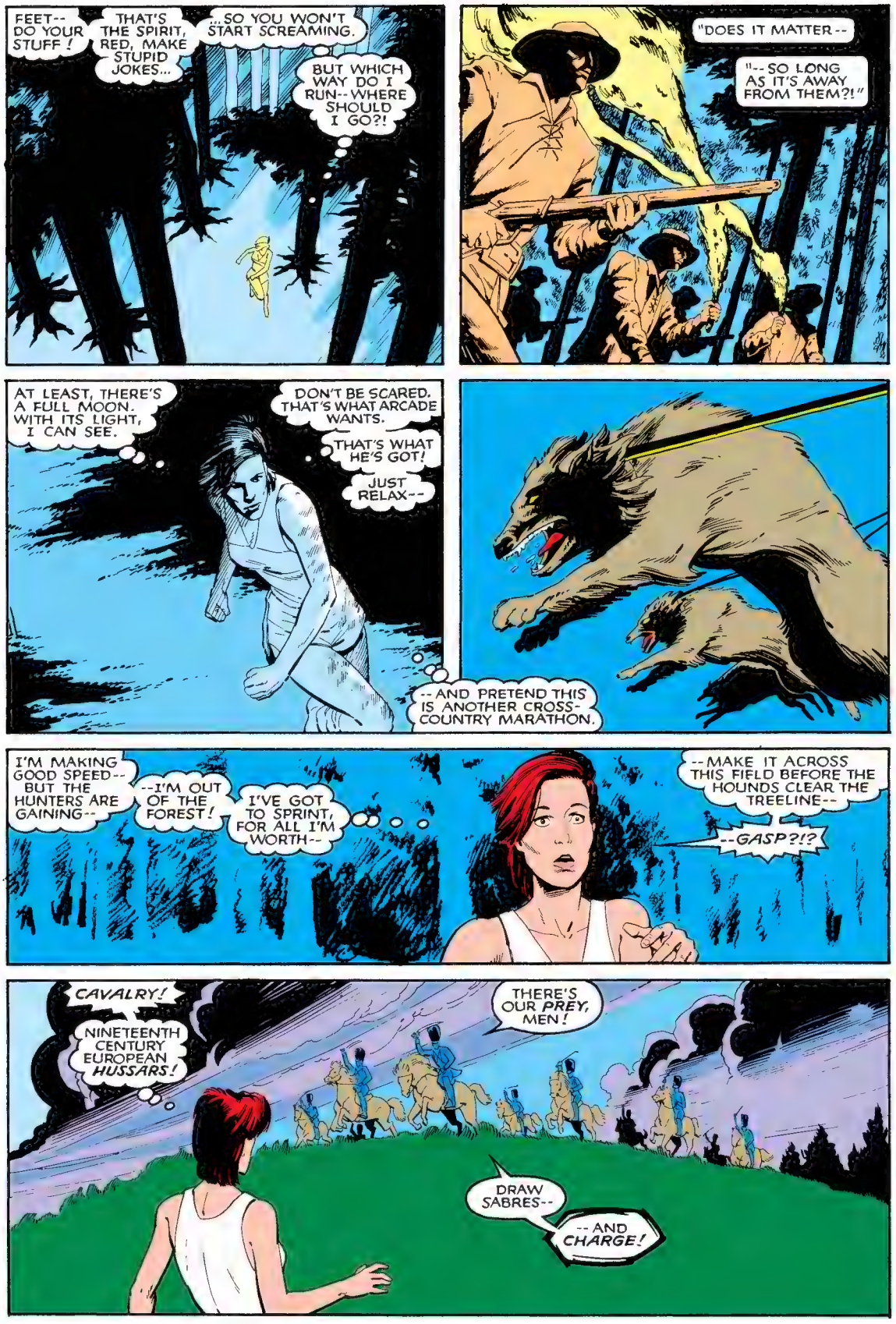

BUT THE YOUNG X-MAN DOESN'T MOVE.
INSTEAD, HE LIFTS HIS FACE TO THE HEAVENS, AND...
HHHOWWDOUUOOOLUUWHH
NIGHT-CRAWLER!
HE SOUNDS LIKE A LOST SOUL.
MY MOMENT OF TRUTH. HE'S IN SUCH PAIN. DO I GO BACK--AND RISK BEING REJECTED, HURT, AGAIN?!
OFF TAXI
KENNEDY AIRPORT, PLEASE.
SURE THING.
HEY, MISS -- YOU'RE SOAKED!
IT'S RAINING.
YEAH, BUT--!
WOULD YOU HURRY, DRIVER? I'VE A FLIGHT TO CATCH.
YOU'RE PAYIN' THE FARE.
HEY, LOOKIT THAT! WEATHER AIN'T FIT FOR MAN NOR BEAST...
...BUT THEM CRAZY JOGGERS GOTTA RUN THEIR MILES.
TAKES ALL KINDS, Y'KNOW? WHY, ONCE I SEEN...
YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED, MY LOVE--
--TO BE ALONE.
I HOPE IT'S WORTH THE PRICE.
HOWWOWLLLLL
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT--?!!
WOLVES--
--IN MANHATTAN?!
TERRIFFIC!


Hmnh?
SFLANG!
THAT NOISE-- IT CAN'T BE--
-- SO FAINT AND FAR AWAY, MY EARS MUST BE PLAYING TRICKS--
-- BUT I'D BETTER MAKE SURE...
BAMF
I'LL ROOST UP HERE IN THE BRANCHES...
... WHERE MY INDIGO SKIN SHOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SPOT AMONGST THESE SHADOWS.
NOTHING UNUSUAL TO SEE--
-- EXCEPT THAT GARBAGE TRUCK!
ZUM TUEFUL-- AT THE WHEEL, THAT'S CHAMBERS...
... CHIEF ASSISTANT TO THAT MADCAP MURDERER FOR HIRE, ARCADE!
THIS TRUCK IS THE MEANS THEY USE TO GRAB THEIR VICTIMS. THE "SFLANNG" SOUND MUST MEAN ONE'S ALREADY BEEN TAKEN!
I CAN'T GO TO THE POLICE-- WITH MY LOOKS, THEY'D PROBABLY ARREST ME. OR OPEN FIRE ON SIGHT. AND I CAN'T GO TO THE LEGITIMATE SUPER HERO GROUPS-- BY THE TIME I ESTABLISH MY BONA-FIDES, IT'LL BE TOO LATE.
THERE'S NOBODY BUT ME TO GO TO THE RESCUE.
WHICH SUITS ME JUST FINE!
NOTHING LIKE SOME ACTION TO TAKE ONE'S MIND OFF ONE'S TROUBLES.
WHO KNOWS-- IF I PLAY THE HERO HARD ENOUGH...
... MAYBE I CAN MAKE THEM ALL GO AWAY.
BAMF


THE GARBAGE TRUCK MAKES ITS WAY UPTOWN, TO THE NORTH BRONX...
THE LAST TWO TIMES THE X-MEN TANGLED WITH ARCADE, WE ANONYMOUSLY REPORTED HIM AND HIS COMPLEX TO THE POLICE--YET THEIR SEARCHES FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF MURDER-WORLD'S EXISTENCE.
THIS ACCESS HATCH LEADS TO HIS HIDDEN LABYRINTH.
PERHAPS AN ANONYMOUS CALL TO THE AVENGERS MIGHT GET BETTER RESULTS, BUT WOULD I BE TURNING TO THEM BECAUSE IT'S THE SMART PLAY...
...OR BECAUSE I'M AFRAID?
IS THAT WHY I WAS NO GOOD AS THE X-MEN'S LEADER--WHY THE BEYONDER LEFT ME BEHIND WHEN HE TOOK THE OTHERS--BECAUSE IN MY HEART OF HEARTS, MY SECRET SOUL...
...I'M A COWARD?!
NO!
NO!
I'M A HERO--AND I MEAN TO PROVE IT!
IT WOULD NOT DO, HOWEVER, TO END UP A VICTIM MYSELF. I MUST BE VERY CAREFUL...
...AND REMEMBER EVERYTHING THE X-MEN EVER LEARNED FROM OUR BATTLES HERE--ESPECIALLY COLOSSUS AND SHADOWCAT'S VISIT A FEW MONTHS AGO. SINCE ARCADE GAVE THEM A GUIDED TOUR OF THE PRIMARY COMPLEX.
I HAVE TO BYPASS THE ALARMS--ACH, MY FINGERS ARE NOT CUT OUT FOR SUCH DELICATE WORK!
PERFECT! ALL THOSE HOURS SPENT MAINTAINING OUR SUPER-SONIC JET AIRCRAFT HAVE PAID OFF SPLENDIDLY! I MAY NOT BE IN SHADOWCAT'S CLASS IN ELECTRONICS WIZARDRY, BUT WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN, I GET THE JOB DONE!
I ADJUSTED THE SECURITY SENSORS TO MAKE ME EFFECTIVELY INVISIBLE. NOW, I CAN MOVE ANYWHERE WITHIN MURDERWORLD--WITHOUT ARCADE KNOWING, UNTIL HE ACTUALLY SEES ME.
THIS IS HIS MAIN WORKSHOP, AND BEYOND, THE STOREROOM FOR HIS ROBOTS. I'D LOVE TO PLAY AROUND IN HERE--I BET I COULD USE THESE ROBOTS...
...BUT I'D RATHER SEE WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE! FROM THE SOUND AND LOOK OF THINGS, ARCADE'S BEGUN HIS GAME!
I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT WHOEVER HE'S AFTER POSSESSES ALL THE COURAGE IN THE WORLD, AND EVEN MORE LUCK.
THEY'RE GOING TO NEED IT.
BCHZYANG!
AT LEAST, UNTIL I ARRIVE, TO SAVE THE DAY!

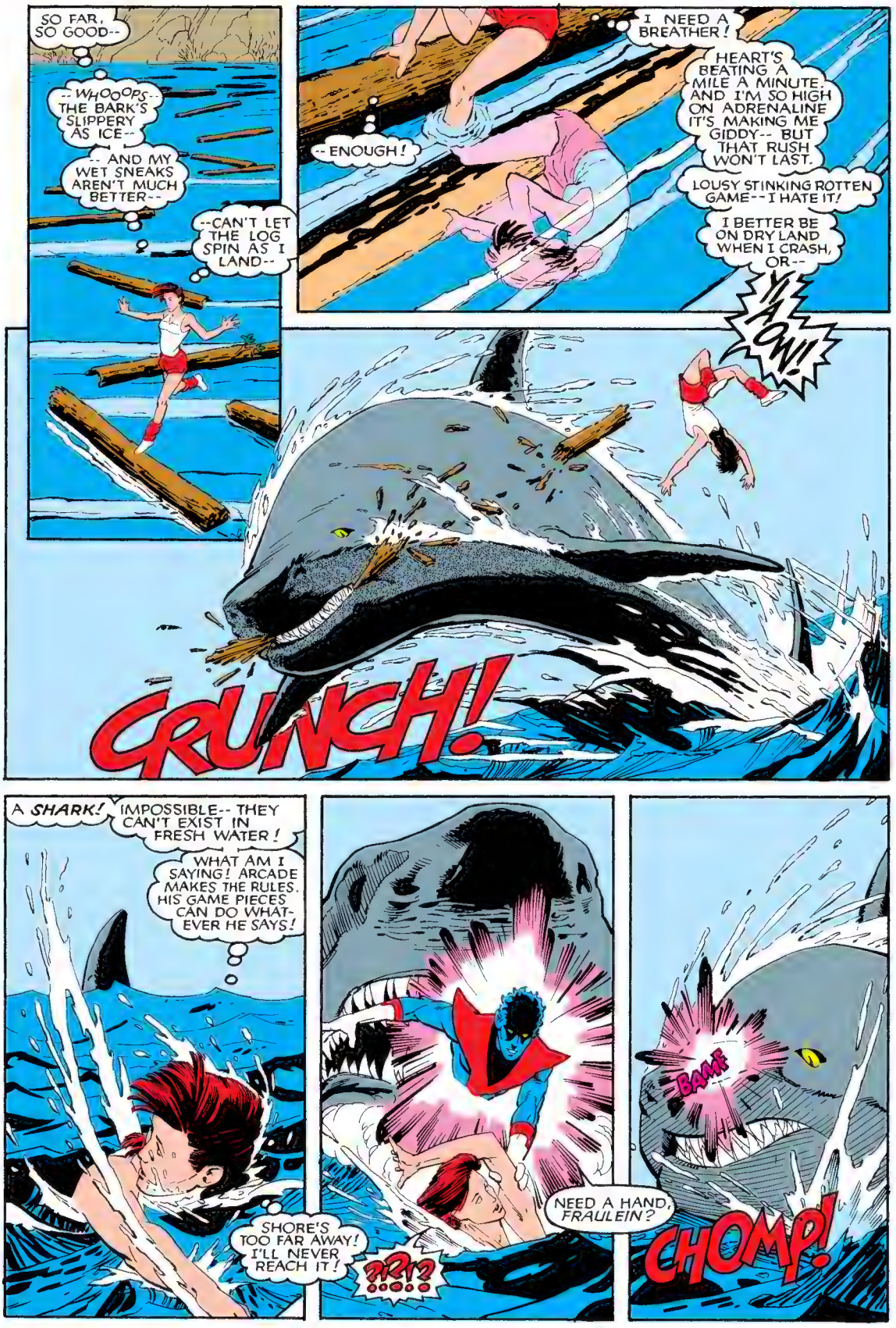
Oohhh
THE WOOZINESS'LL PASS, HONEY.
IT'S A SIDE-EFFECT OF THE KNOCK-OUT GAS...
...USED WHEN YOU WERE NABBED.
WHO--?! WHAT-- ?!!
WELCOME TO MURDER-WORLD, SWEETHEART.
I'M ARCADE. I HOPE YOU ENJOY THESE LAST MINUTES OF YOUR LIFE.
THIS CAN'T BE REAL!
I'M DREAMING!
YOU WISH.
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE. FIND THE EXIT AND YOU'RE FREE.
TOO BAD-- FOR YOU-- THAT'S A LOT EASIER SAID THAN DONE.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS--?
FOR THE MONEY, BABE.
AND THE FUN--
--THOUGH I DOUBT YOU'LL PROVIDE VERY MUCH OF THAT.
PLEASE, THERE'S BEEN SOME MISTAKE! I'M A COLLEGE STUDENT, I'M NOBODY IMPORTANT!
BREAKS MY HEART, KID. BUT SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, WANTS YOU DEAD. AND THEY'RE PAYIN' YOURS TRULY BIG BUCKS TO DO THE JOB.
YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
MURDERWORLD IS READY, ARCADE.
THANK YOU, MISS LOCKE.
READY OR NOT, DARLIN'--
--YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY!
I-- I'M IN A TRANSPARENT PLASTIC BALL--
BZING!
--OHWHW!
-- BEING FIRED INTO A GIANT PINBALL MACHINE!


AIEAEE!
WHENEVER I HIT--
KZANG
--A BUMPER--
BOMP!
--I GET A SHOCK!
I'M GOING TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I'M GOING TO OWHW!
ROLLING AND BOUNCING--
--MAKING ME SICK--
BLIP!
--THE BALL'S FLYING OFF THE BOARD!
IS IT OVER?!!
BYANG!
100
YAWN!
WHAT A PATHETIC SCORE!
SHE WON'T LAST LONG. GAME'S HARDLY WORTH THE EFFORT-- OR ITS COMMISSION.
DO ME A FAVOR, MISS LOCKE--
--DULL, DULL, DULL--
"--AND WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER."
NOW WHAT--?!
KBASH!
I'M STILL ALIVE-- I GUESS THE GAME'S NOT FINISHED.
LUCKY ME.
WHERE THE HECK AM I-- A FOREST?!
NOTHING LIKE THIS ANYWHERE NEAR NEW YORK-- BRRRR-- MUST BE IN THE MOUNTAINS, THE AIR'S WAY TOO COOL FOR SUMMER, EVEN AT NIGHT.
WHAT'S THAT NOISE--?!
ARRAAOOOOOO
WOLF HOWLS?! LIKE I HEARD IN CENTRAL PARK-- TERRIFIC!
!?!
BLAM!

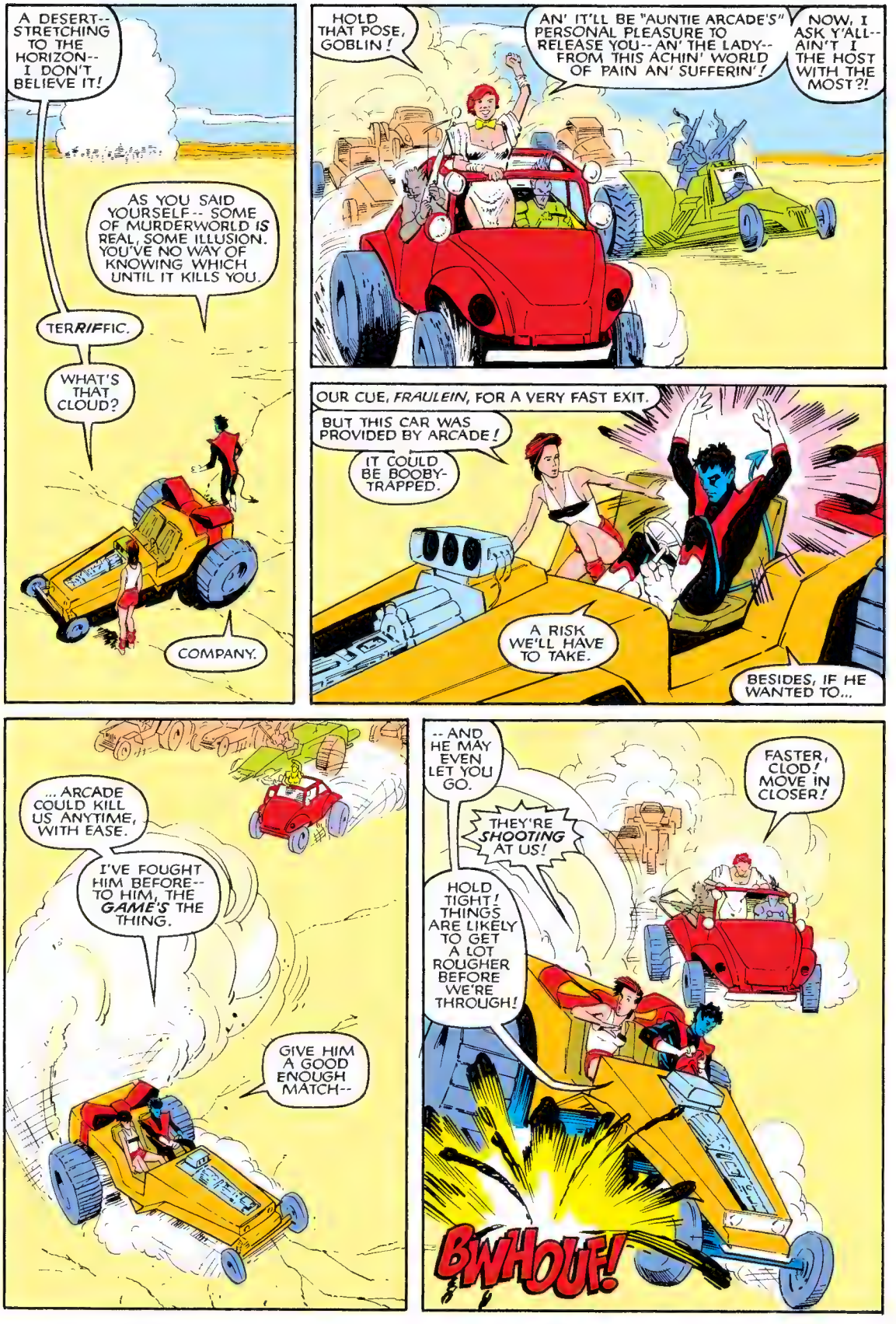

FEET-- DO YOUR STUFF!
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, RED, MAKE STUPID JOKES...
...SO YOU WON'T START SCREAMING.
BUT WHICH WAY DO I RUN-- WHERE SHOULD I GO?!
"DOES IT MATTER--
"-- SO LONG AS IT'S AWAY FROM THEM?!"
AT LEAST, THERE'S A FULL MOON. WITH ITS LIGHT, I CAN SEE.
DON'T BE SCARED. THAT'S WHAT ARCADE WANTS.
THAT'S WHAT HE'S GOT!
JUST RELAX--
-- AND PRETEND THIS IS ANOTHER CROSS-COUNTRY MARATHON.
I'M MAKING GOOD SPEED-- BUT THE HUNTERS ARE GAINING--
--I'M OUT OF THE FOREST!
I'VE GOT TO SPRINT, FOR ALL I'M WORTH--
-- MAKE IT ACROSS THIS FIELD BEFORE THE HOUNDS CLEAR THE TREELINE--
--GASP?!?
CAVALRY!
NINETEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN HUSSARS!
THERE'S OUR PREY, MEN!
DRAW SABRES--
-- AND CHARGE!

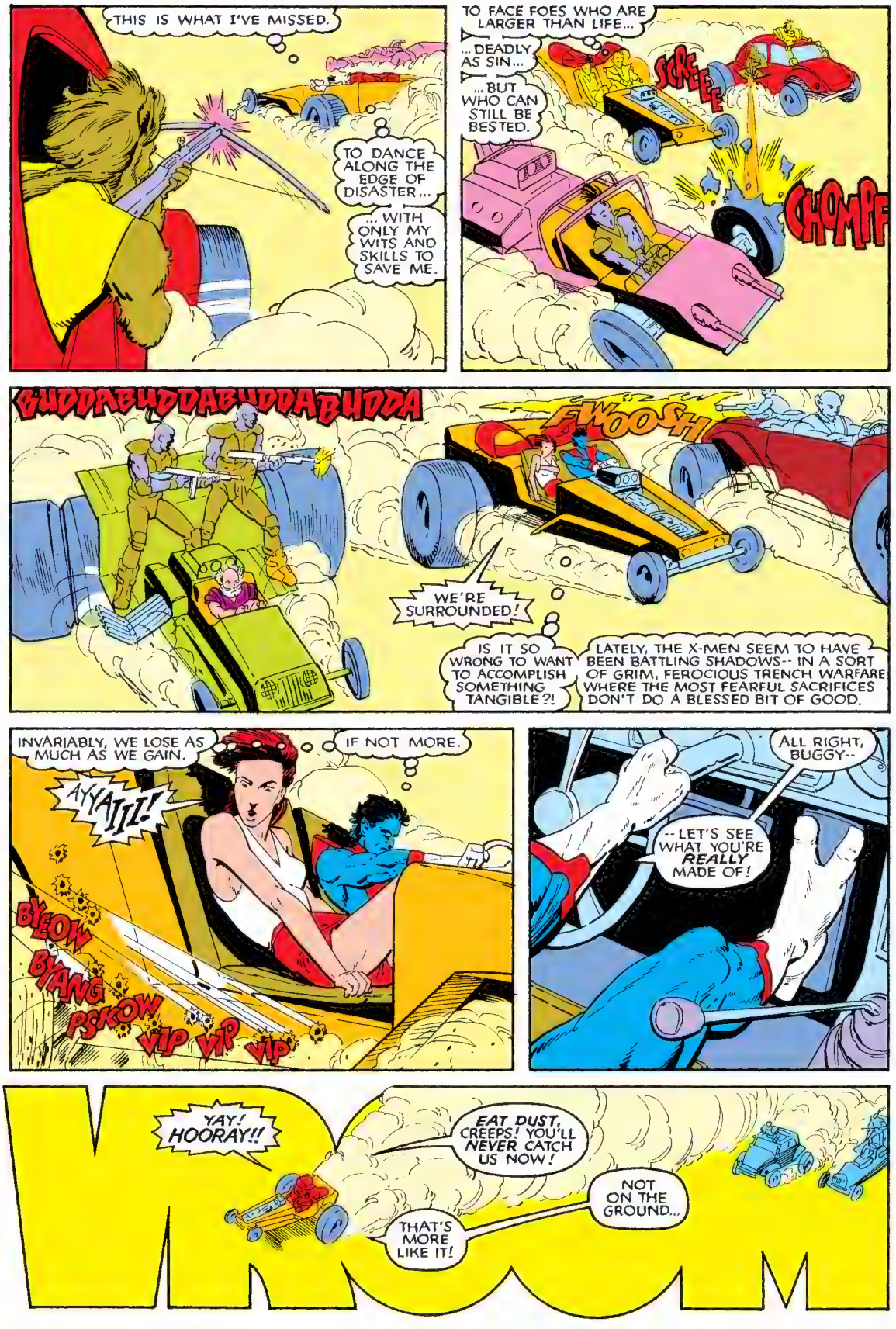
WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE--
-- FOR THIS TO BE AN HALLUCINATION!
WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?!
WHAT DID I EVER DO-- TO ANYONE-- TO MAKE THEM WANT TO GO TO SO MUCH TROUBLE--
-- TO GET RID OF ME...
YAIKES!
TOO MANY HORSEMEN-- HAVE TO STAY LOW, KEEP MOVING, TURN THEIR NUMBERS AGAINST THEM--
-- MAYBE THEY'LL RUN INTO EACH OTHER INSTEAD--
WHOULENF!
WHAT A GREAT TIME TO TRIP, GOT TO--
--KEEP ROLLING!
HORSES WON'T STOMP LIVING ANIMALS ON THE GROUND IN FRONT OF THEM--
--THEY'LL USUALLY LEAP OVER--
-- I HOPE!

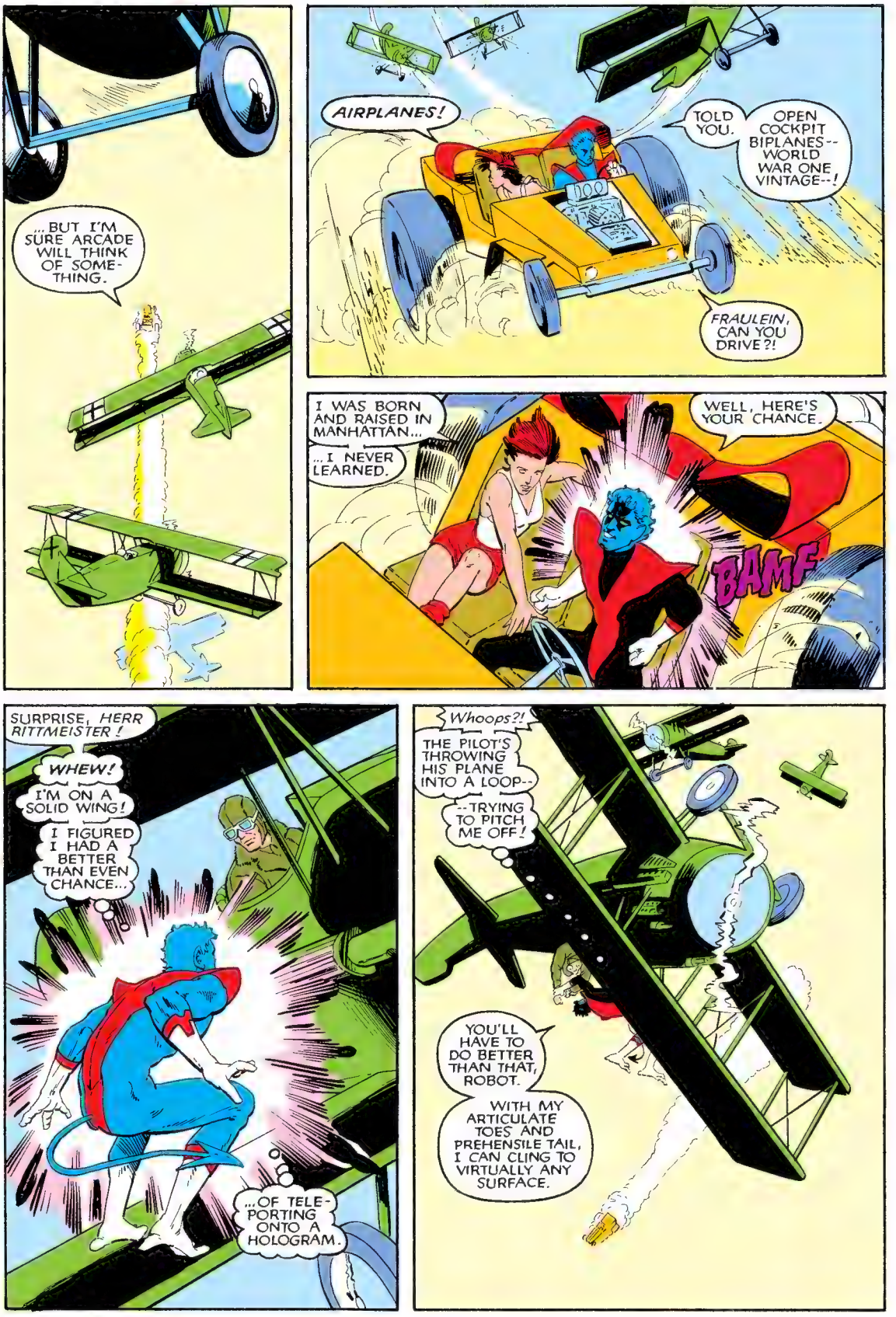
ON MY FEET, I'M A DEAD DUCK.
BUT IF I CAN GRAB A MOUNT...
...AND HEAD FOR THE HILLS--?!
DREAM ON, RED--BUT WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?!
HEY!
WHERE'D HE GO?!
I'M FALLING THROUGH THE ANIMAL, LIKE HE DIDN'T EXIST! IT MUST BE A HOLO-GRAM--A THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROJECTION!
OUCH!
THIS BLUFF IS NO ILLUSION--!
HOW HIGH IS IT, THOUGH?! WHAT'S AT THE BOTTOM ?!!
WATER!
SPLASH!
THE GRADE'S TOO STEEP FOR THE CAVALRY, BUT NOT THE DOGS.
I CAN'T STAY HERE--
-- I'LL HAVE TO CHANCE THE RIVER.
THAT WON'T BE EASY, EITHER. THE CURRENT LOOKS PRETTY FIERCE AND THERE ARE LOGS FLOWING DOWNSTREAM.
I DON'T DARE SWIM, I'M SURE TO GET BRAINED! I'LL HAVE TO TRY JUMPING FROM TRUNK TO TRUNK!

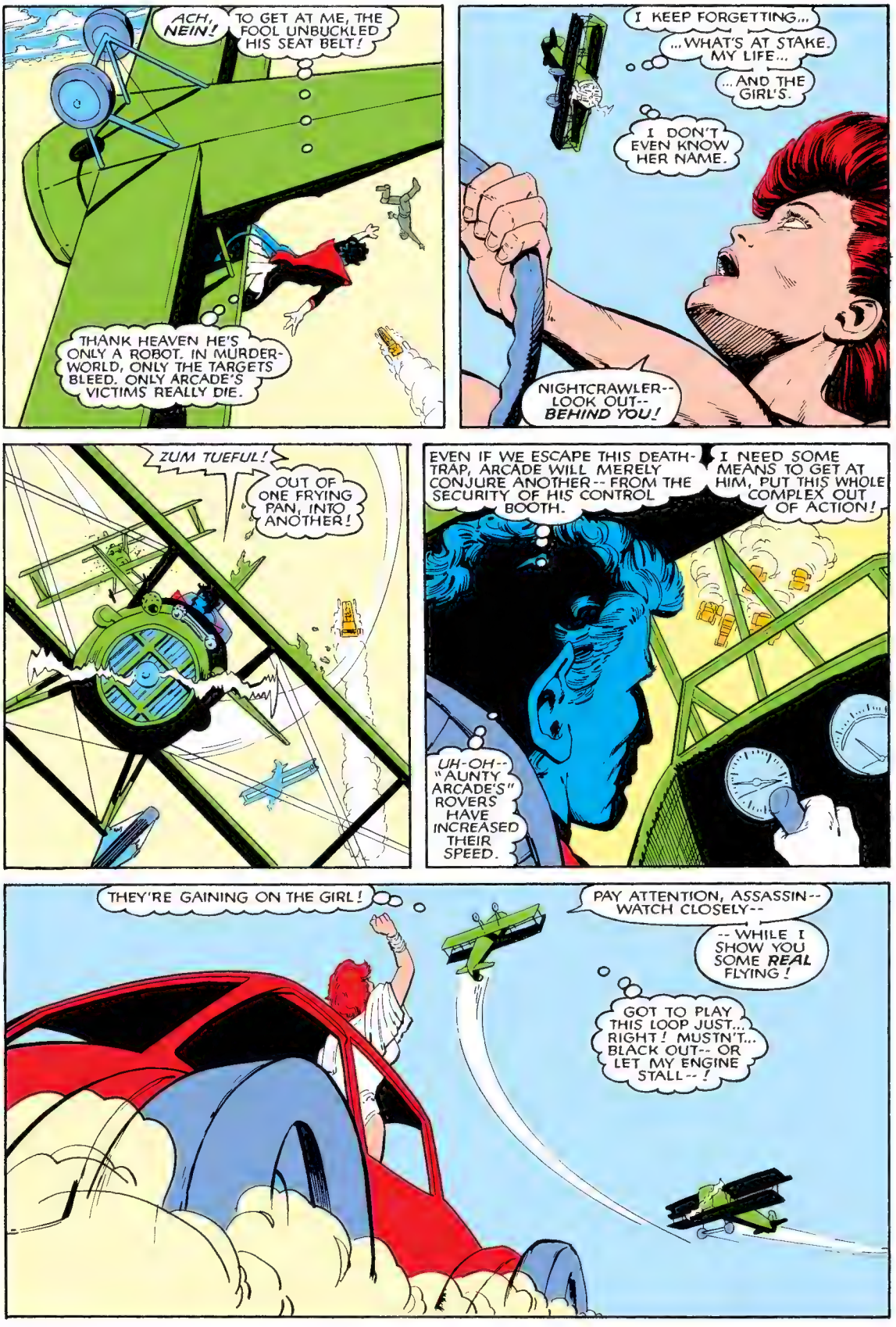

SO FAR, SO GOOD--
--WHOOOPS-- THE BARK'S SLIPPERY AS ICE--
-- AND MY WET SNEAKS AREN'T MUCH BETTER--
--CAN'T LET THE LOG SPIN AS I LAND--
--ENOUGH!
I NEED A BREATHER!
HEART'S BEATING A MILE A MINUTE AND I'M SO HIGH ON ADRENALINE IT'S MAKING ME GIDDY-- BUT THAT RUSH WON'T LAST.
LOUSY STINKING ROTTEN GAME--I HATE IT!
I BETTER BE ON DRY LAND WHEN I CRASH, OR--
YI-AOW!!
CRUNCH!
A SHARK!
IMPOSSIBLE-- THEY CAN'T EXIST IN FRESH WATER!
WHAT AM I SAYING! ARCADE MAKES THE RULES. HIS GAME PIECES CAN DO WHATEVER HE SAYS!
SHORE'S TOO FAR AWAY! I'LL NEVER REACH IT!
?!?!?
NEED A HAND, FRAULEIN?
BAMF
CHOMP!

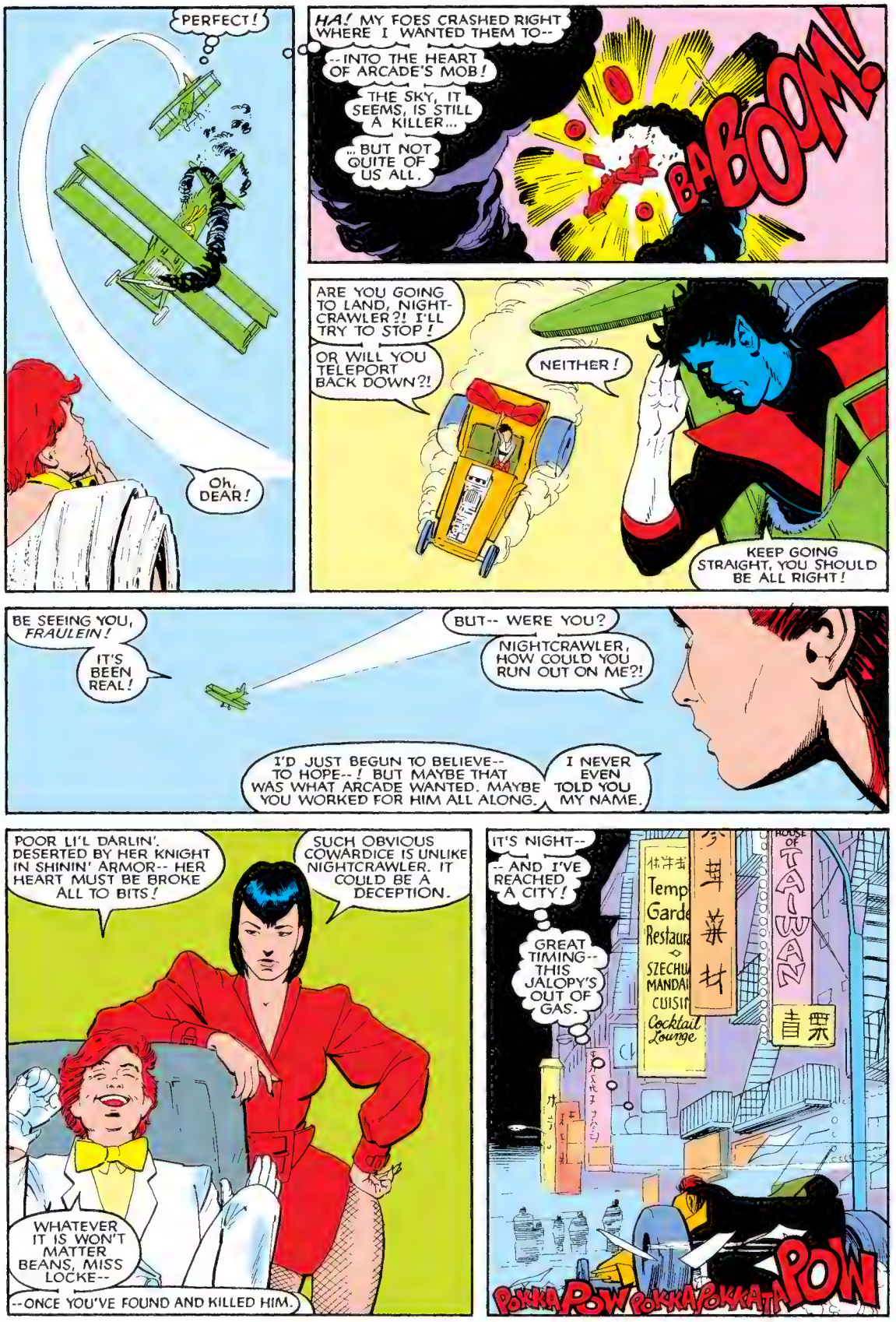
OHO! A NEW PLAYER?!
NIGHT-CRAWLER! WHAT A DELIGHTFULLY UNEXPECTED SURPRISE!
ALL OF A SUDDEN, THIS GAME HAS GOTTEN A WHOLE LOT MORE INTERESTING!
MY APOLOGIES IF YOU FEEL A BIT ILL-- THAT'S AN UNFORTUNATE EFFECT OF TELEPORTING.
OTHERWISE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'D HAVE ARRIVED SOONER, BUT MURDERWORLD'S A BIG PLACE-- AND I DIDN'T WANT TO PREMATURELY ANNOUNCE MY PRESENCE TO ARCADE BY TRIPPING ANY ALARMS.
I'M NIGHT-CRAWLER-- SUPER HERO EXTRAORDINAIRE! AND YOUR NAME--?
GET AWAY FROM ME!
AN ODD NAME. WERE YOUR PARENTS 60's ROCK STARS?
I MEAN IT, BUSTER-- OR I'LL CLOBBER YOU!
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID.
I'M HERE TO HELP!
YEAH-- RIGHT-- SURE YOU ARE!
YOU COULD BE ONE OF ARCADE'S ROBOTS-- OR SOME GOON?!
I CONCEDE I CERTAINLY LOOK THE PART. BUT APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING.
THAT'S RIGHT! IN THIS PLACE, I'VE GOT NO IDEA WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT ISN'T-- SO WHY SHOULD I TRUST ANYTHING YOU SAY?!
VIRTUALLY MY WORDS TO AMANDA-- THROWN BACK IN MY FACE.
NO REASON, FRAULEIN-- SAVE THAT, ON YOUR OWN, YOU'LL ALMOST CERTAINLY PERISH.
WITH ME-- THE TWO OF US, WORKING TOGETHER-- YOU HAVE A CHANCE.
WORDS ARE EASY.
GIVE ME A CHANCE TO PROVE THEM, THEN.
O-OKAY.

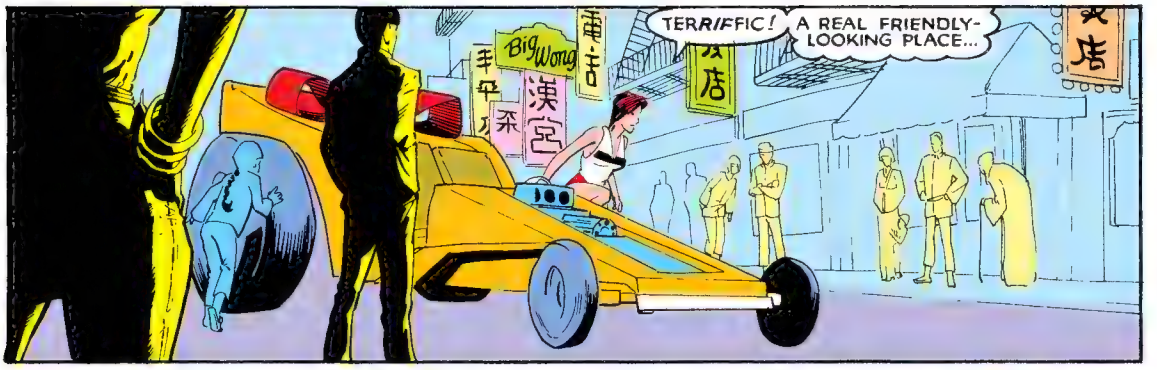

A DESERT-- STRETCHING TO THE HORIZON-- I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
AS YOU SAID YOURSELF-- SOME OF MURDERWORLD IS REAL, SOME ILLUSION. YOU'VE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHICH UNTIL IT KILLS YOU.
TERRIFFIC.
WHAT'S THAT CLOUD?
COMPANY.
HOLD THAT POSE, GOBLIN!
AN' IT'LL BE "AUNTIE ARCADE'S" PERSONAL PLEASURE TO RELEASE YOU-- AN' THE LADY-- FROM THIS ACHIN' WORLD OF PAIN AN' SUFFERIN'!
NOW, I ASK Y'ALL-- AIN'T I THE HOST WITH THE MOST?!
OUR CUE, FRAULEIN, FOR A VERY FAST EXIT.
BUT THIS CAR WAS PROVIDED BY ARCADE!
IT COULD BE BOOBY-TRAPPED.
A RISK WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE.
BESIDES, IF HE WANTED TO...
... ARCADE COULD KILL US ANYTIME, WITH EASE.
I'VE FOUGHT HIM BEFORE-- TO HIM, THE GAME'S THE THING.
GIVE HIM A GOOD ENOUGH MATCH--
-- AND HE MAY EVEN LET YOU GO.
THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!
HOLD TIGHT! THINGS ARE LIKELY TO GET A LOT ROUGHER BEFORE WE'RE THROUGH!
FASTER, CLOD! MOVE IN CLOSER!
BWHOUF!

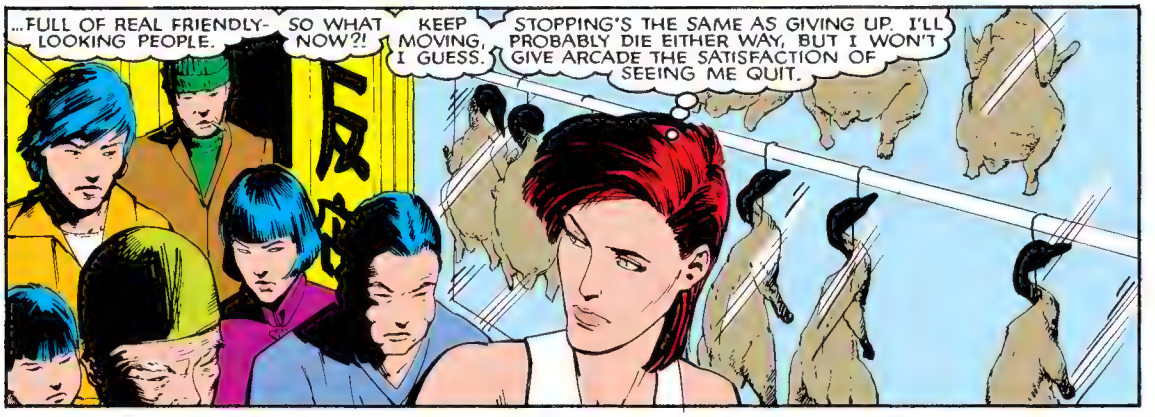

THIS IS WHAT I'VE MISSED.
TO DANCE ALONG THE EDGE OF DISASTER...
... WITH ONLY MY WITS AND SKILLS TO SAVE ME.
TO FACE FOES WHO ARE LARGER THAN LIFE...
... DEADLY AS SIN...
... BUT WHO CAN STILL BE BESTED.
SCREEEE
CHOMP!
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA
WOOSH!
WE'RE SURROUNDED!
IS IT SO WRONG TO WANT TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING TANGIBLE?!
LATELY, THE X-MEN SEEM TO HAVE BEEN BATTLING SHADOWS-- IN A SORT OF GRIM, FEROCIOUS TRENCH WARFARE WHERE THE MOST FEARFUL SACRIFICES DON'T DO A BLESSED BIT OF GOOD.
INVARIABLY, WE LOSE AS MUCH AS WE GAIN.
IF NOT MORE.
AYYAIII!
BYEOW
BYANG
PSKOW
VIP VIP VIP
ALL RIGHT, BUGGY--
--LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'RE REALLY MADE OF!
VROOM
YAY! HOORAY!!
EAT DUST, CREEPS! YOU'LL NEVER CATCH US NOW!
NOT ON THE GROUND...
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!


...BUT I'M SURE ARCADE WILL THINK OF SOME-THING.
AIRPLANES!
TOLD YOU.
OPEN COCKPIT BIPLANES--WORLD WAR ONE VINTAGE--!
FRAULEIN, CAN YOU DRIVE?!
I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN MANHATTAN...
...I NEVER LEARNED.
WELL, HERE'S YOUR CHANCE.
BAMF
SURPRISE, HERR RITTMEISTER!
WHEW!
I'M ON A SOLID WING!
I FIGURED I HAD A BETTER THAN EVEN CHANCE...
...OF TELE-PORTING ONTO A HOLOGRAM.
Whoops?!
THE PILOT'S THROWING HIS PLANE INTO A LOOP--
--TRYING TO PITCH ME OFF!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT, ROBOT.
WITH MY ARTICULATE TOES AND PREHENSILE TAIL, I CAN CLING TO VIRTUALLY ANY SURFACE.

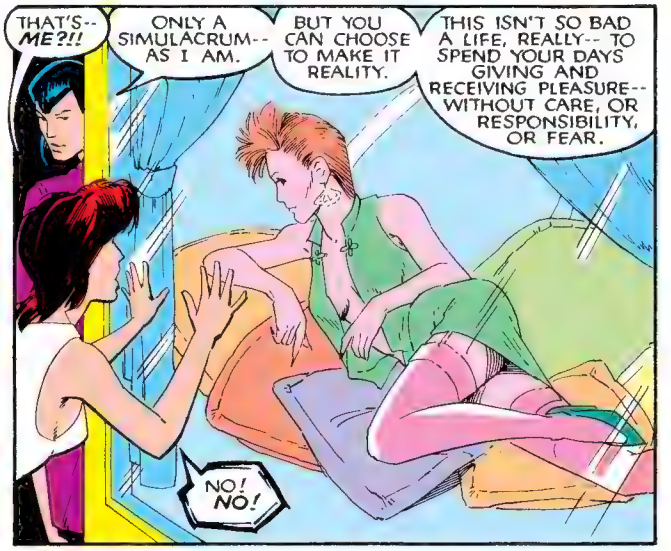

ACH, NEIN!
TO GET AT ME, THE FOOL UNBUCKLED HIS SEAT BELT!
THANK HEAVEN HE'S ONLY A ROBOT. IN MURDERWORLD, ONLY THE TARGETS BLEED. ONLY ARCADE'S VICTIMS REALLY DIE.
I KEEP FORGETTING...
...WHAT'S AT STAKE. MY LIFE...
...AND THE GIRL'S.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER NAME.
NIGHTCRAWLER-- LOOK OUT-- BEHIND YOU!
ZUM TUEFUL!
OUT OF ONE FRYING PAN, INTO ANOTHER!
EVEN IF WE ESCAPE THIS DEATH-TRAP, ARCADE WILL MERELY CONJURE ANOTHER-- FROM THE SECURITY OF HIS CONTROL BOOTH.
I NEED SOME MEANS TO GET AT HIM, PUT THIS WHOLE COMPLEX OUT OF ACTION!
UH-OH-- "AUNTY ARCADE'S" ROVERS HAVE INCREASED THEIR SPEED.
THEY'RE GAINING ON THE GIRL!
PAY ATTENTION, ASSASSIN-- WATCH CLOSELY--
-- WHILE I SHOW YOU SOME REAL FLYING!
GOT TO PLAY THIS LOOP JUST... RIGHT! MUSTN'T... BLACK OUT-- OR LET MY ENGINE STALL--!

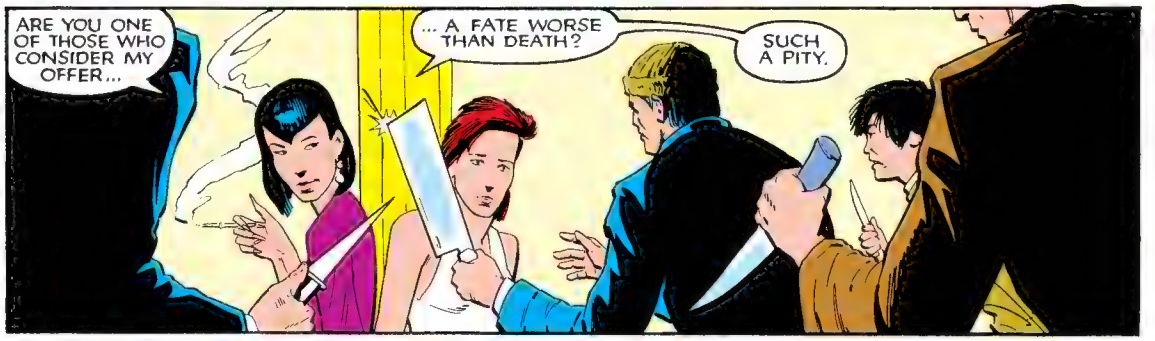

PERFECT!
Oh, DEAR!
HA! MY FOES CRASHED RIGHT WHERE I WANTED THEM TO--
--INTO THE HEART OF ARCADE'S MOB!
THE SKY, IT SEEMS, IS STILL A KILLER...
...BUT NOT QUITE OF US ALL.
BA BOOM!
ARE YOU GOING TO LAND, NIGHT-CRAWLER?! I'LL TRY TO STOP!
OR WILL YOU TELEPORT BACK DOWN?!
NEITHER!
KEEP GOING STRAIGHT, YOU SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT!
BE SEEING YOU, FRAULEIN!
IT'S BEEN REAL!
BUT-- WERE YOU?
NIGHTCRAWLER, HOW COULD YOU RUN OUT ON ME?!
I'D JUST BEGUN TO BELIEVE-- TO HOPE--! BUT MAYBE THAT WAS WHAT ARCADE WANTED. MAYBE YOU WORKED FOR HIM ALL ALONG.
I NEVER EVEN TOLD YOU MY NAME.
POOR LI'L DARLIN'. DESERTED BY HER KNIGHT IN SHININ' ARMOR-- HER HEART MUST BE BROKE ALL TO BITS!
SUCH OBVIOUS COWARDICE IS UNLIKE NIGHTCRAWLER. IT COULD BE A DECEPTION.
WHATEVER IT IS WON'T MATTER BEANS, MISS LOCKE--
--ONCE YOU'VE FOUND AND KILLED HIM.
IT'S NIGHT--
-- AND I'VE REACHED A CITY!
GREAT TIMING-- THIS JALOPY'S OUT OF GAS.
HOUSE OF TAIWAN
Cocktail Lounge
POKKA POW POKKAPOKKATA POW


TERRIFFIC! A REAL FRIENDLY-LOOKING PLACE...
Big Wong


...FULL OF REAL FRIENDLY-LOOKING PEOPLE.
SO WHAT NOW?!
KEEP MOVING, I GUESS.
STOPPING'S THE SAME AS GIVING UP. I'LL PROBABLY DIE EITHER WAY, BUT I WON'T GIVE ARCADE THE SATISFACTION OF SEEING ME QUIT.

INTERESTED IN A PLACE TO HIDE, MY DEAR?
I CAN OFFER A SORT OF SANCTUARY.
AN... ESCAPE.


THAT'S-- ME?!!
ONLY A SIMULACRUM-- AS I AM.
BUT YOU CAN CHOOSE TO MAKE IT REALITY.
THIS ISN'T SO BAD A LIFE, REALLY-- TO SPEND YOUR DAYS GIVING AND RECEIVING PLEASURE-- WITHOUT CARE, OR RESPONSIBILITY, OR FEAR.
NO! NO!


ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE WHO CONSIDER MY OFFER...
... A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH?
SUCH A PITY.

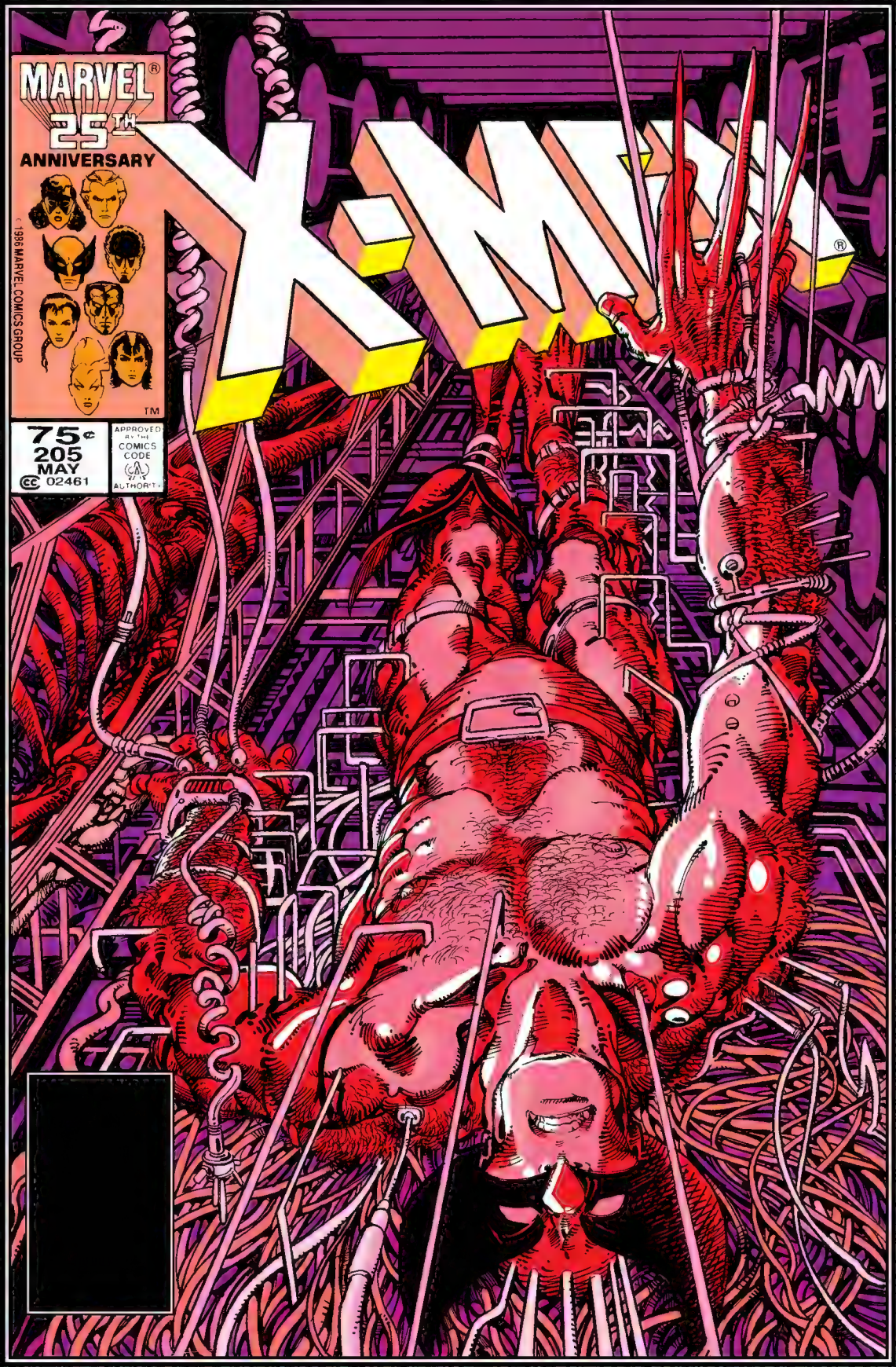
CUE THE FANFARE--
--AS THE HERO MAKES HIS DRAMATIC AND TIMELY ENTRANCE!
NIGHT-CRAWLER?!?
WHO ELSE?
OH YE OF LITTLE FAITH-- DID YOU THINK I'D ABANDONED YOU?!
BACK OFF, YOU BRAWNY, BRUTAL, BACK- STABBING BOZOS!
SOK!
THE YOUNG LADY IS UNDER MY PROTECTION!
THAT DON'T COUNT FOR MUCH, FUZZBALL!
NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR HONEY ARE GETTIN' OUT O' MURDERWORLD.
WANT TO BET, BAD GUY?
NIGHTCRAWLER, THIS ISN'T FUNNY!
QUITE THE CONTRARY, FRAULEIN-- IT'S A RIOT!
BY THE WAY, ARCADE-- YOU SHOULD USE THIS HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION MORE OFTEN.
YOU LOOK SO MARVELLOUS IN FUSCHIA.
SMAK!
YOU'RE CRAZY, MISTER! HOW IS MAKING ARCADE MAD GOING TO DO US ANY GOOD?!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, TOOTS!
X-MAN-- AS OF RIGHT NOW--
--YOU'RE HISTORY!
LOVE TO CHAT BUT WE HAVE TO RUN--
--WATCH OUT FOR THAT PUDDLE--
--ACH, HEAVENS, HOW RUDE, HOW CLUMSY OF ME--
--SO DREADFULLY SORRY--
--TOODLES!
SPLOOPSH!

PROMISES, PROMISES--!
WHAT THE--?!
COLOSSUS!?!
WHERE'D HE COME FROM?!?
WRAK!
MY ADAMANTIUM CLAWS'LL TAKE CARE OF ARCADE'S COMPUTERS, STORM!
AS MY LIGHTNING BOLT SHALL OF HIS CONTROL CONSOLE, WOLVERINE!
HEY?! WAITAMINNIT?!!
I THOUGHT STORM LOST HER ELEMENTAL POWERS-- WHOUPLIGH!
BTHOMP!
SEEMS TO ME, SUGAR, LIKE YOU BEEN MISINFORMED.
YOUR TOYS ARE ALL BROKEN, ARCADE-HONEY.
AND WITH MURDERWORLD OUT OF ACTION...
...OUR ELF BUDDY'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE SCOOTIN' WITH THE LADY.
GAME, SET AND MATCH, ASSASSIN--
--TO NIGHT-CRAWLER!
HOW THE BLAZES DID YOU MUTIES GET INSIDE WITH-OUT TRIGGERING ANY ALARMS?! YOU COULDN'T HAVE SNUCK IN WITH NIGHTCRAWLER OR YOU'D HAVE HELPED HIM SOONER--AND HOW COME NONE OF YOU LOOK RIGHT--?!
OH!
Oh!
OF COURSE!
YOU WERE HERE ALREADY-- BECAUSE YOU AIN'T THE REAL X-MEN AT ALL...
...YOU'RE MY ROBOT VERSIONS OF 'EM!
THE STIFF NAILED ME WITH MY OWN PIECES-- HE REALLY AN' TRULY BEAT ME AT MY OWN GAME!
THIS TIME.

LATER, ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE OF MANHATTAN...
...FROM PREVIOUS ENCOUNTERS WITH ARCADE, I KNEW WHERE HE STORED HIS ROBOTS. AFTER I LEFT YOU, I MADE MY WAY THERE...
...MODIFIED THE PROGRAMMING ON AS MANY OF THEM AS POSSIBLE AND TURNED THEM LOOSE.
I COULDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE THERE WAS TOO MUCH RISK OF ARCADE OVERHEARING.
I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE SEEN THE LOOK ON ARCADE'S FACE WHEN THEY BURST IN--I'LL BET IT WAS PRICELESS!
I'LL BET IT WAS.
YOU REALLY LOVED IT, THAT WHOLE MESS?
MOST FUN I'VE HAD IN AGES.
JUDITH, THAT'S THE LIFE WE HEROES LEAD.
A THRILL A MINUTE, HUH--THE WILDER, THE BETTER?
WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
BECAUSE I'M SCARED! BECAUSE I NEARLY DIED IN THE CROSSFIRE YOU SEEM TO TAKE FOR GRANTED!
4C
YOU'RE SAFE NOW. I DON'T THINK HE'LL COME AFTER YOU AGAIN--AND IF HE DOES, CALL ME!
THAT ISN'T THE POINT! LISTEN TO YOURSELF NIGHTCRAWLER--YOU'RE JUST LIKE HIM! HOOKED ON THE EXCITEMENT! THE WAY YOU TALK-- IF CREEPS LIKE ARCADE DIDN'T EXIST, YOU'D HAVE TO INVENT HIM, JUST TO GIVE YOUR LIFE PURPOSE!
IS THAT TRUE? IS THAT ALL YOU ARE?!
KARAK!
WHAT I AM, FRAULEIN, IS THE MAN WHO RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE YOURS...

...AND MAY YET DO SO AGAIN.
WHO THE HECK ARE YOU GUYS?! HOW'D YOU GET INSIDE MY APARTMENT?!!
THERE'S NO NEED FOR ALARM, MISS. YOUR SUPER LET US IN.
I'M COLIN LEWIS, STATE DEPARTMENT.
AND I AM COLONEL MAX REIGER OF THE RURITANIAN NATIONAL GUARD.
THANK HEAVEN WE ARRIVED IN TIME...
...TO FIND YOU ALIVE AND UNHARMED--

--YOUR MOST SERENE AND ROYAL MAJESTY...
...JUDITH RASSENDYLL, LAST OF THE ELFBURGS...
...QUEEN OF RURITANIA!
?!?
NEXT: THE WOUNDED WOLF BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH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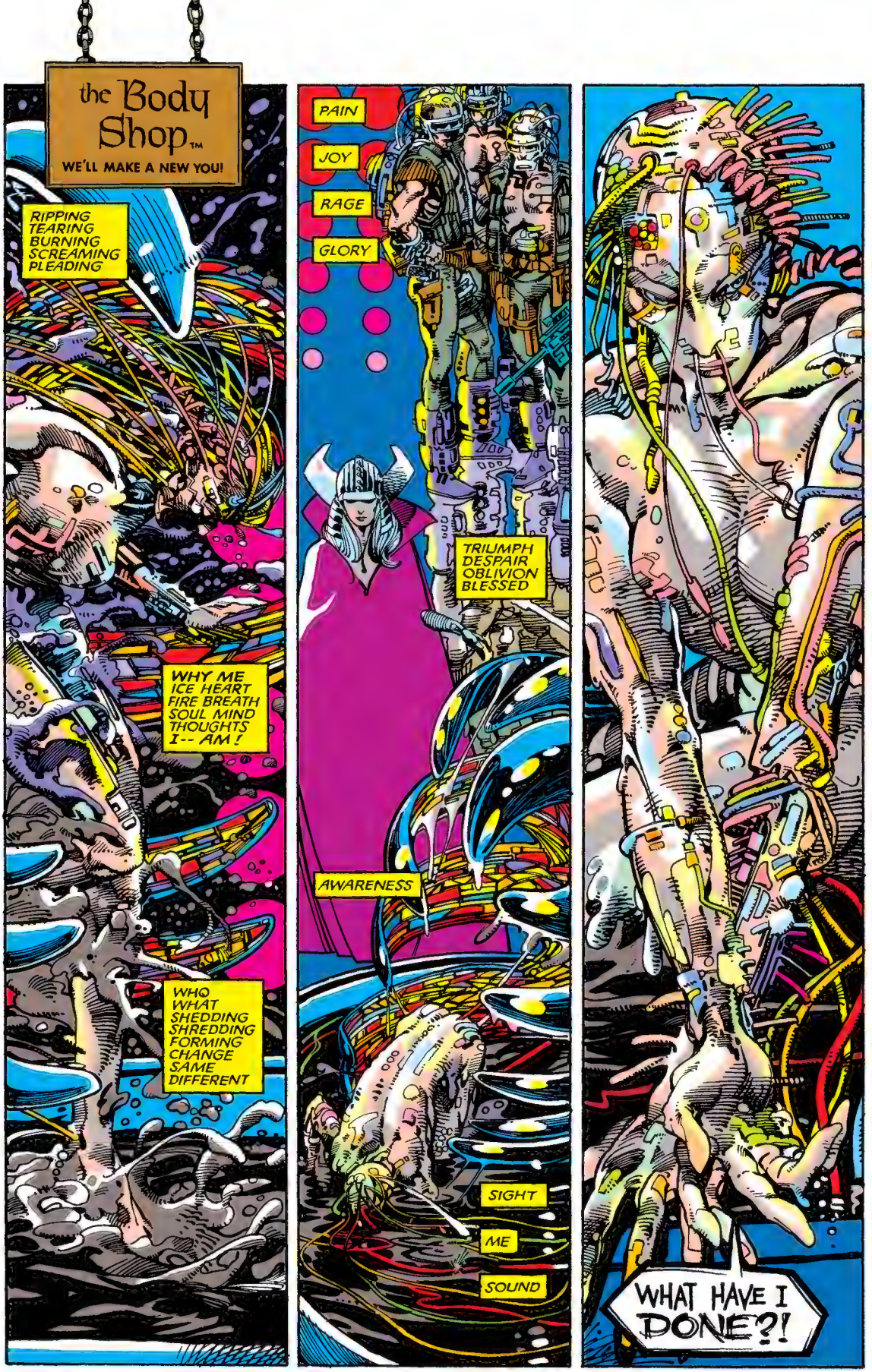
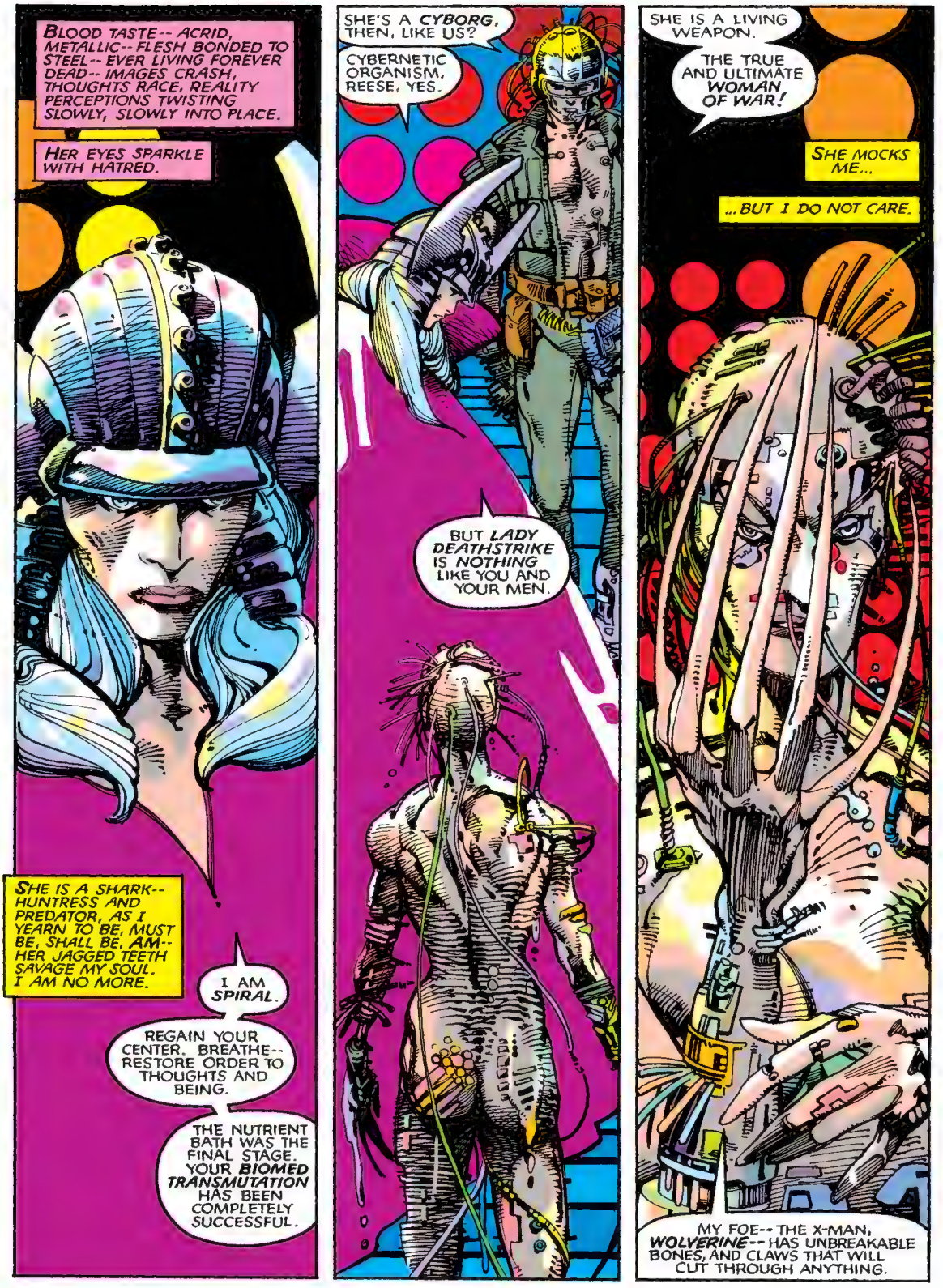
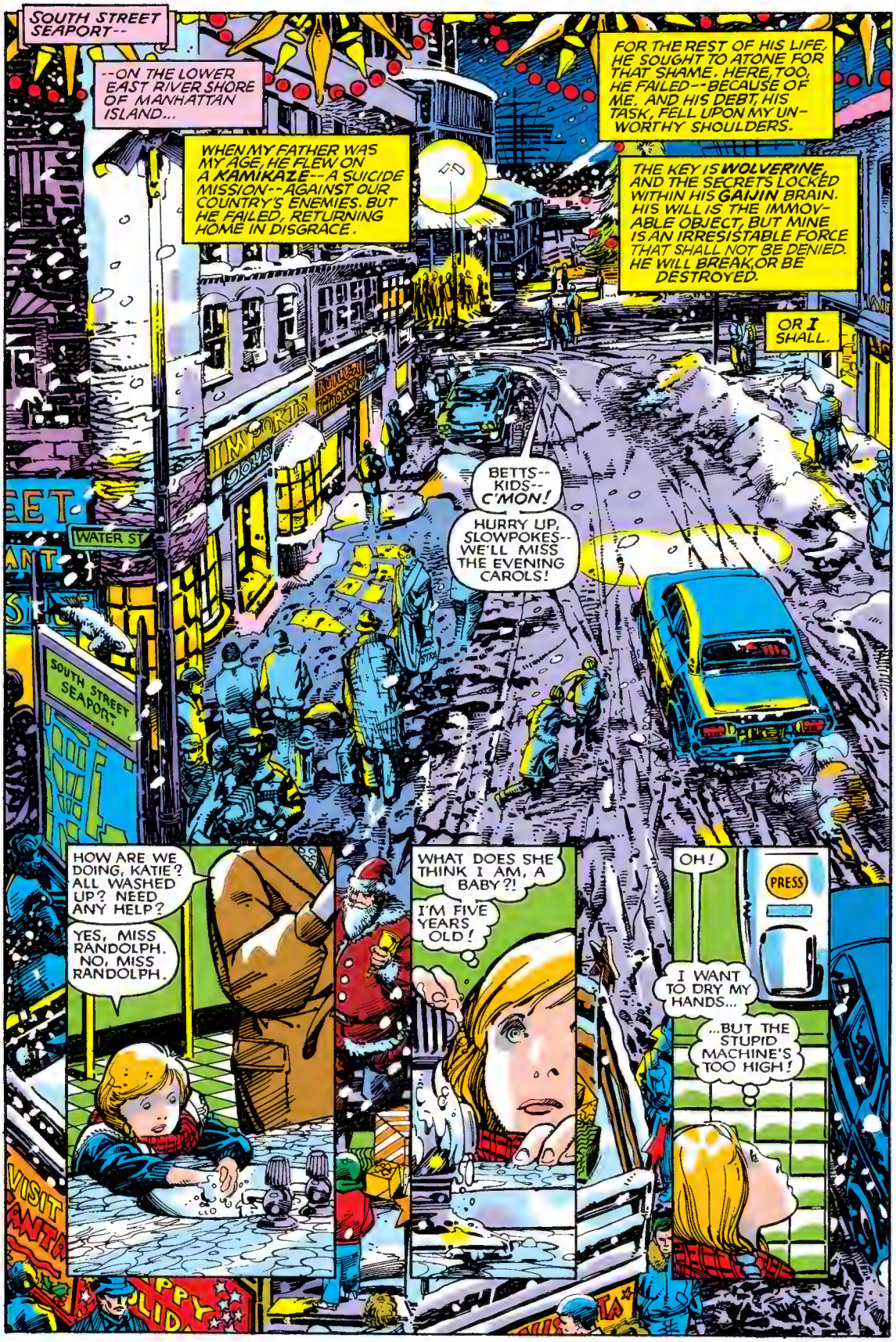
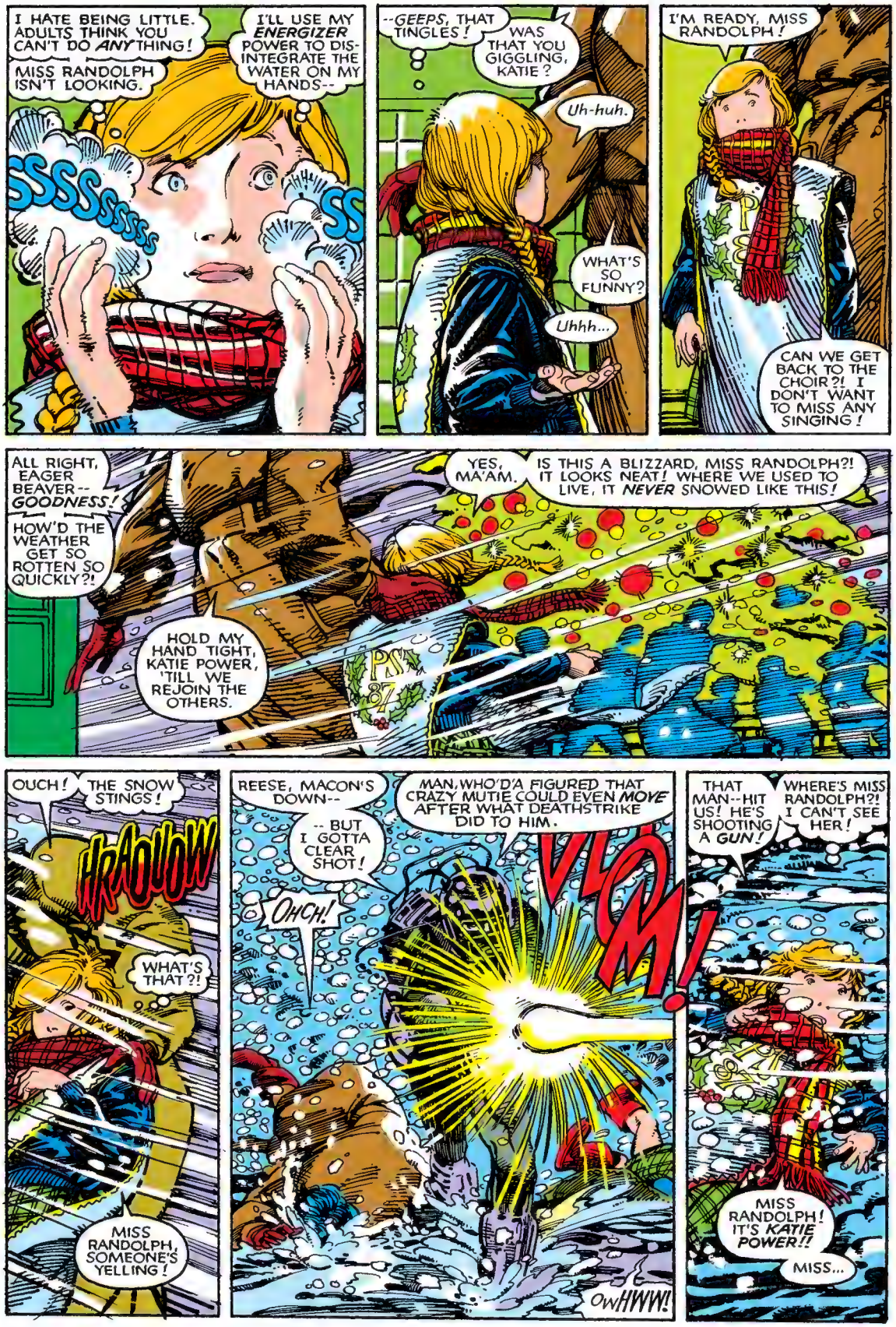

the Body Shop™
WE'LL MAKE A NEW YOU!
RIPPING
TEARING
BURNING
SCREAMING
PLEADING
WHY ME
ICE HEART
FIRE BREATH
SOUL MIND
THOUGHTS
I-- AM!
WHO
WHAT
SHEDDING
SHREDDING
FORMING
CHANGE
SAME
DIFFERENT
PAIN
JOY
RAGE
GLORY
TRIUMPH
DESPAIR
OBLIVION
BLESSED
AWARENESS
SIGHT
ME
SOUND
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!


BLOOD TASTE-- ACRID, METALLIC-- FLESH BONDED TO STEEL-- EVER LIVING FOREVER DEAD-- IMAGES CRASH, THOUGHTS RACE, REALITY PERCEPTIONS TWISTING SLOWLY, SLOWLY INTO PLACE.
HER EYES SPARKLE WITH HATRED.
SHE IS A SHARK-- HUNTRESS AND PREDATOR, AS I YEARN TO BE, MUST BE, SHALL BE, AM-- HER JAGGED TEETH SAVAGE MY SOUL. I AM NO MORE.
I AM SPIRAL.
REGAIN YOUR CENTER. BREATHE-- RESTORE ORDER TO THOUGHTS AND BEING.
THE NUTRIENT BATH WAS THE FINAL STAGE. YOUR BIOMED TRANSMUTATION HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL.
SHE'S A CYBORG, THEN, LIKE US?
CYBERNETIC ORGANISM, REESE, YES.
BUT LADY DEATHSTRIKE IS NOTHING LIKE YOU AND YOUR MEN.
SHE IS A LIVING WEAPON.
THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE WOMAN OF WAR!
SHE MOCKS ME...
...BUT I DO NOT CARE.
MY FOE-- THE X-MAN, WOLVERINE-- HAS UNBREAKABLE BONES, AND CLAWS THAT WILL CUT THROUGH ANYTHING.

"NOW, MILADY...
"...SO DO YOU."
BUT THE PROCESS CAN BE REVERSED?
SPIRAL--WHEN MY MISSION IS COMPLETE, YOU AGREED TO RESTORE NOT ONLY MY HUMANITY, BUT THAT OF MY ASSOCIATES AS WELL!
THE BODY SHOP...
...GUARANTEES SATISFACTION...
"...OR YOUR MONEY BACK."
GREAT DEAL.
TOO GREAT.
HEY, REESE, THIS ONNA LEVEL?
DOES IT MATTER?
WHATEVER HAPPENS, WE'LL BE NO WORSE OFF THAN WE ARE. ALL WE HAVE TO DO--TO EARN A HEFTY CHUNK OF CHANGE AN' MAYBE A WHOLE LOT MORE BESIDES--IS TRACK DOWN, AN' MOST LIKELY KILL...
...THE MAN WE HATE MOST IN THE WORLD.
HOW AMUSING--TO DESIRE THAT WHICH WAS NEVER REALLY YOURS, THIS SO-CALLED "HUMANITY." TO DREAM OF REGAINING IT THROUGH THE MURDER OF ANOTHER.
AND, LASTLY, TO DANCE WITH THE DEVIL, BELIEVING YOU WILL SPIN AWAY WITH YOUR SOUL INTACT AND UNTAINTED.
DOMO ARIGATO, SPIRAL.
FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE THIS NIGHT...
...OYAMA YURIKO IS ETERNALLY GRATEFUL.
LADY YURIKO, IT WAS MY...
...PLEASURE.


SOUTH STREET SEAPORT--
--ON THE LOWER EAST RIVER SHORE OF MANHATTAN ISLAND...
WHEN MY FATHER WAS MY AGE, HE FLEW ON A KAMIKAZE--A SUICIDE MISSION--AGAINST OUR COUNTRY'S ENEMIES. BUT HE FAILED, RETURNING HOME IN DISGRACE.
FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, HE SOUGHT TO ATONE FOR THAT SHAME. HERE, TOO, HE FAILED--BECAUSE OF ME. AND HIS DEBT, HIS TASK, FELL UPON MY UNWORTHY SHOULDERS.
THE KEY IS WOLVERINE, AND THE SECRETS LOCKED WITHIN HIS GAIJIN BRAIN. HIS WILL IS THE IMMOVABLE OBJECT, BUT MINE IS AN IRRESISTABLE FORCE THAT SHALL NOT BE DENIED. HE WILL BREAK, OR BE DESTROYED.
OR I SHALL.
IMPORTS
WATER ST
SOUTH STREET SEAPORT
BETTS--KIDS--C'MON!
HURRY UP, SLOWPOKES--WE'LL MISS THE EVENING CAROLS!
HOW ARE WE DOING, KATIE? ALL WASHED UP? NEED ANY HELP?
YES, MISS RANDOLPH. NO, MISS RANDOLPH.
WHAT DOES SHE THINK I AM, A BABY?!
I'M FIVE YEARS OLD!
OH!
PRESS
I WANT TO DRY MY HANDS...
...BUT THE STUPID MACHINE'S TOO HIGH!


I HATE BEING LITTLE. ADULTS THINK YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING!
MISS RANDOLPH ISN'T LOOKING.
I'LL USE MY ENERGIZER POWER TO DISINTEGRATE THE WATER ON MY HANDS--
SSSSSSSSS
SS
--GEEPS, THAT TINGLES!
WAS THAT YOU GIGGLING, KATIE?
Uh-huh.
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
Uhhh...
I'M READY, MISS RANDOLPH!
CAN WE GET BACK TO THE CHOIR?! I DON'T WANT TO MISS ANY SINGING!
ALL RIGHT, EAGER BEAVER-- GOODNESS!
HOW'D THE WEATHER GET SO ROTTEN SO QUICKLY?!
HOLD MY HAND TIGHT, KATIE POWER, 'TILL WE REJOIN THE OTHERS.
YES, MA'AM.
IS THIS A BLIZZARD, MISS RANDOLPH?! IT LOOKS NEAT! WHERE WE USED TO LIVE, IT NEVER SNOWED LIKE THIS!
PS 87
OUCH! THE SNOW STINGS!
KRADOOW
WHAT'S THAT?!
MISS RANDOLPH, SOMEONE'S YELLING!
REESE, MACON'S DOWN--
-- BUT I GOTTA CLEAR SHOT!
OHCH!
MAN, WHO'D'A FIGURED THAT CRAZY MUTIE COULD EVEN MOVE AFTER WHAT DEATHSTRIKE DID TO HIM.
VLAM!
OWHWW!
THAT MAN--HIT US! HE'S SHOOTING A GUN!
WHERE'S MISS RANDOLPH?! I CAN'T SEE HER!
MISS RANDOLPH! IT'S KATIE POWER!!
MISS...

Stan Lee
PRESENTS
Wunderwolf
A SOLO ADVENTURE, STARRING WOLVERINE OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN
...RANDOLPH?
CHRIS CLAREMONT
STORY SCRIPT
BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
STORY ART & COLOR
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, letterer
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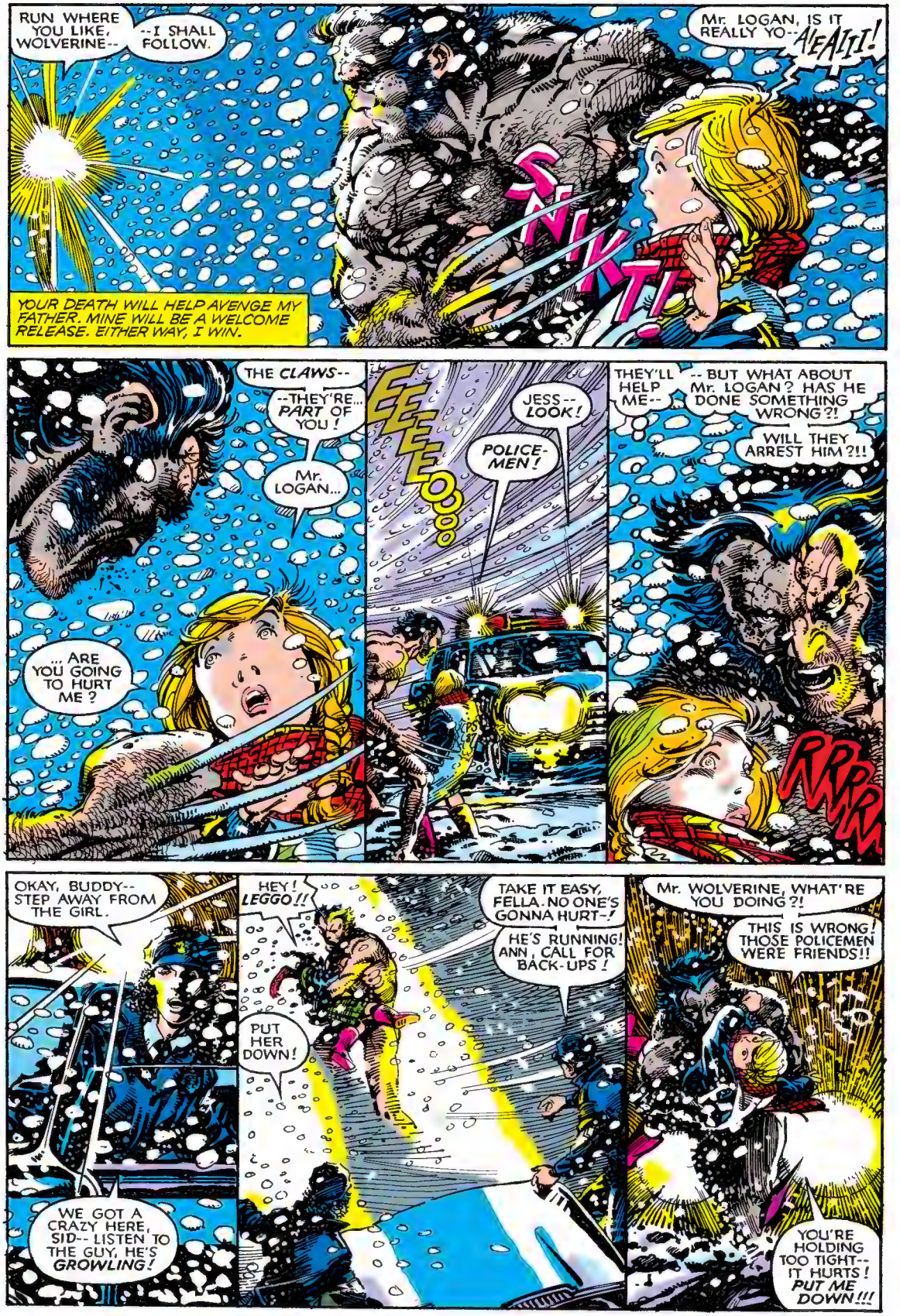
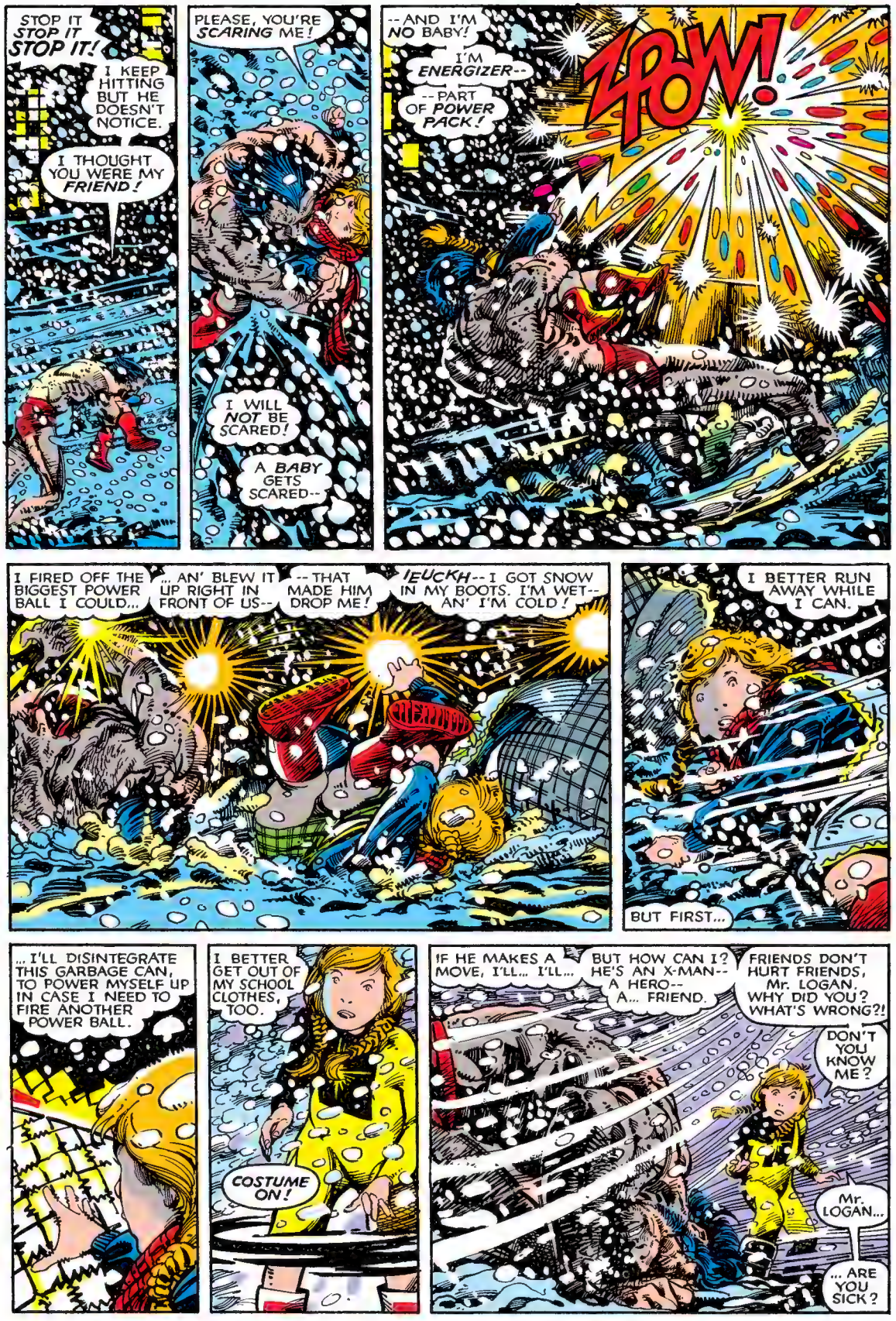
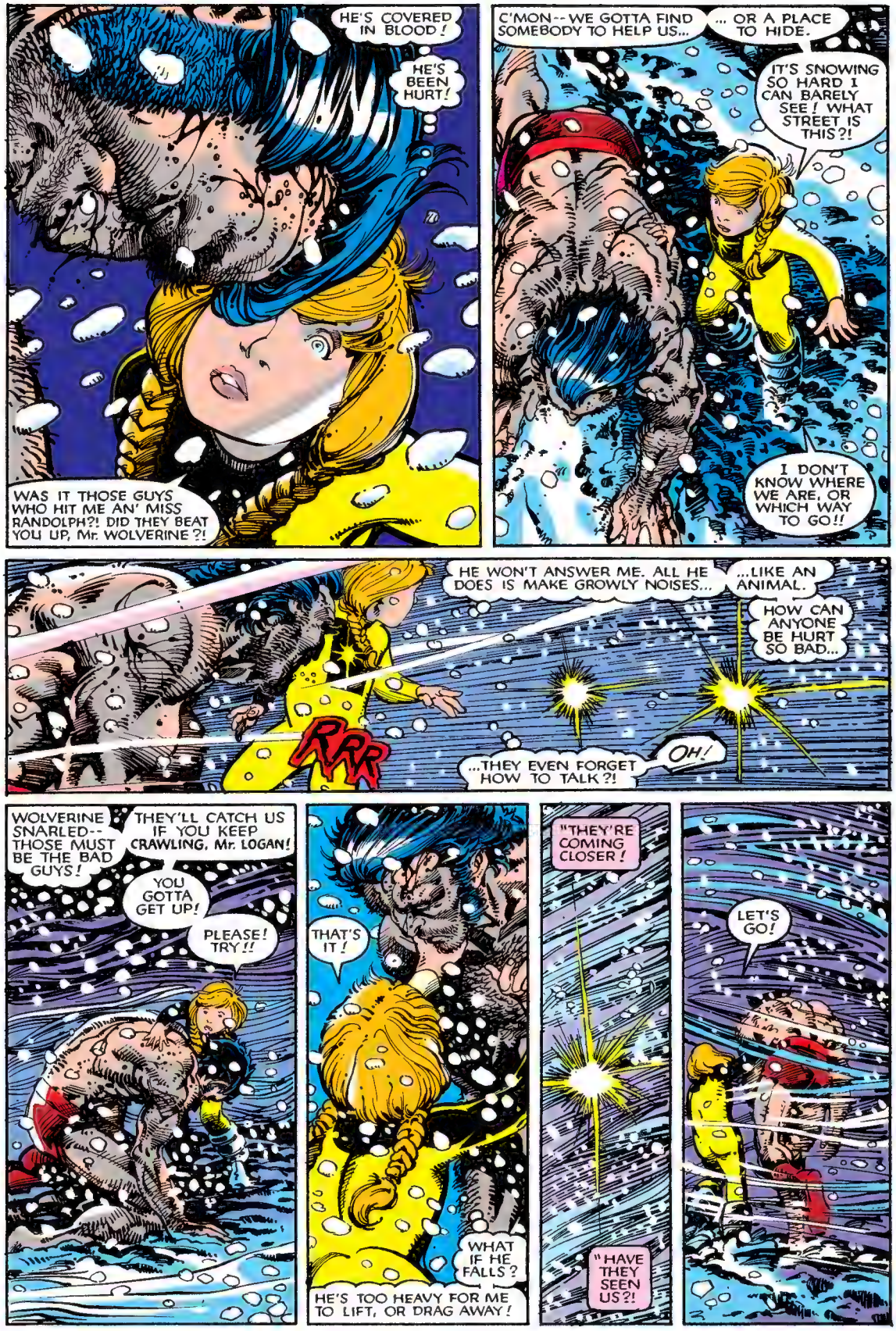
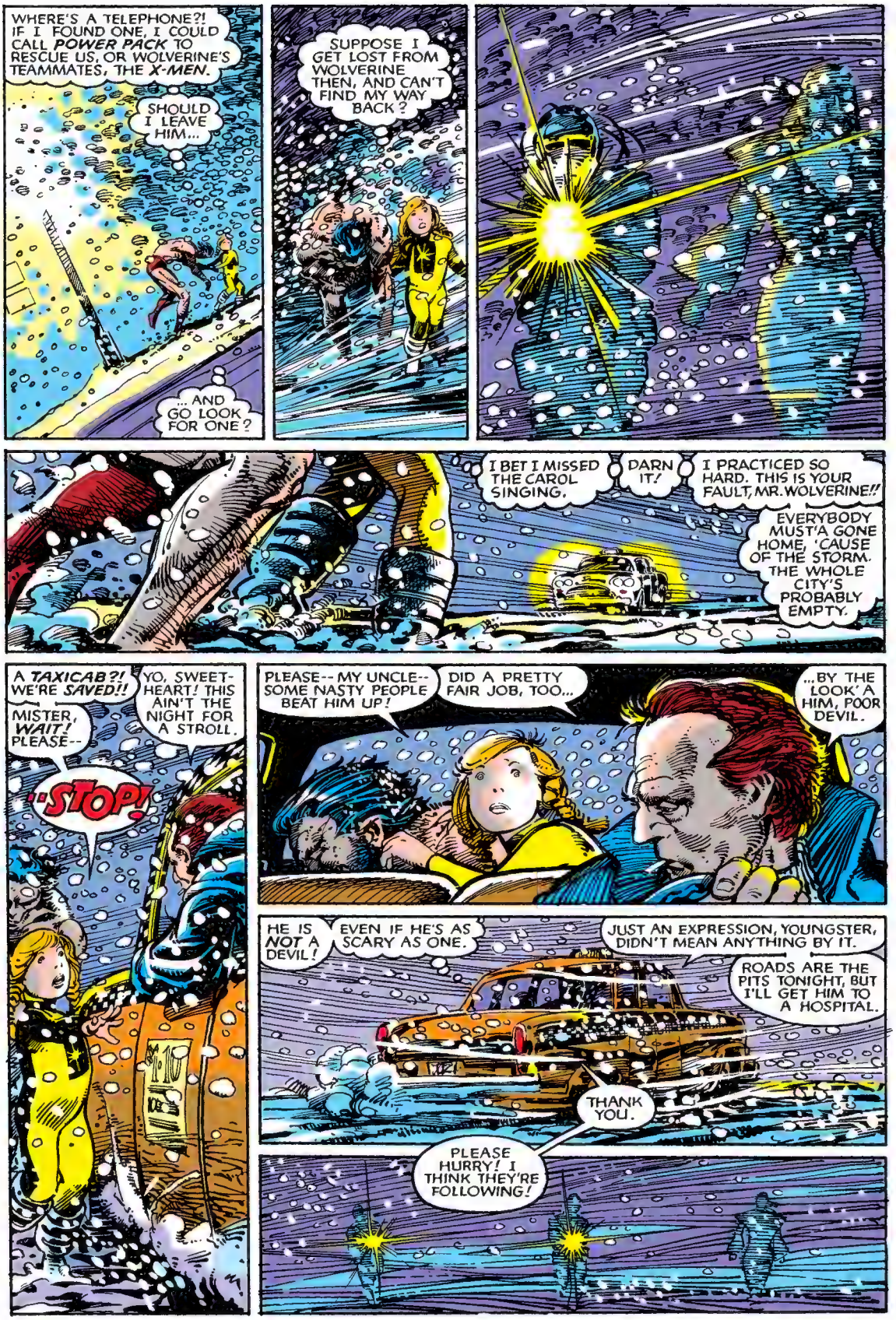
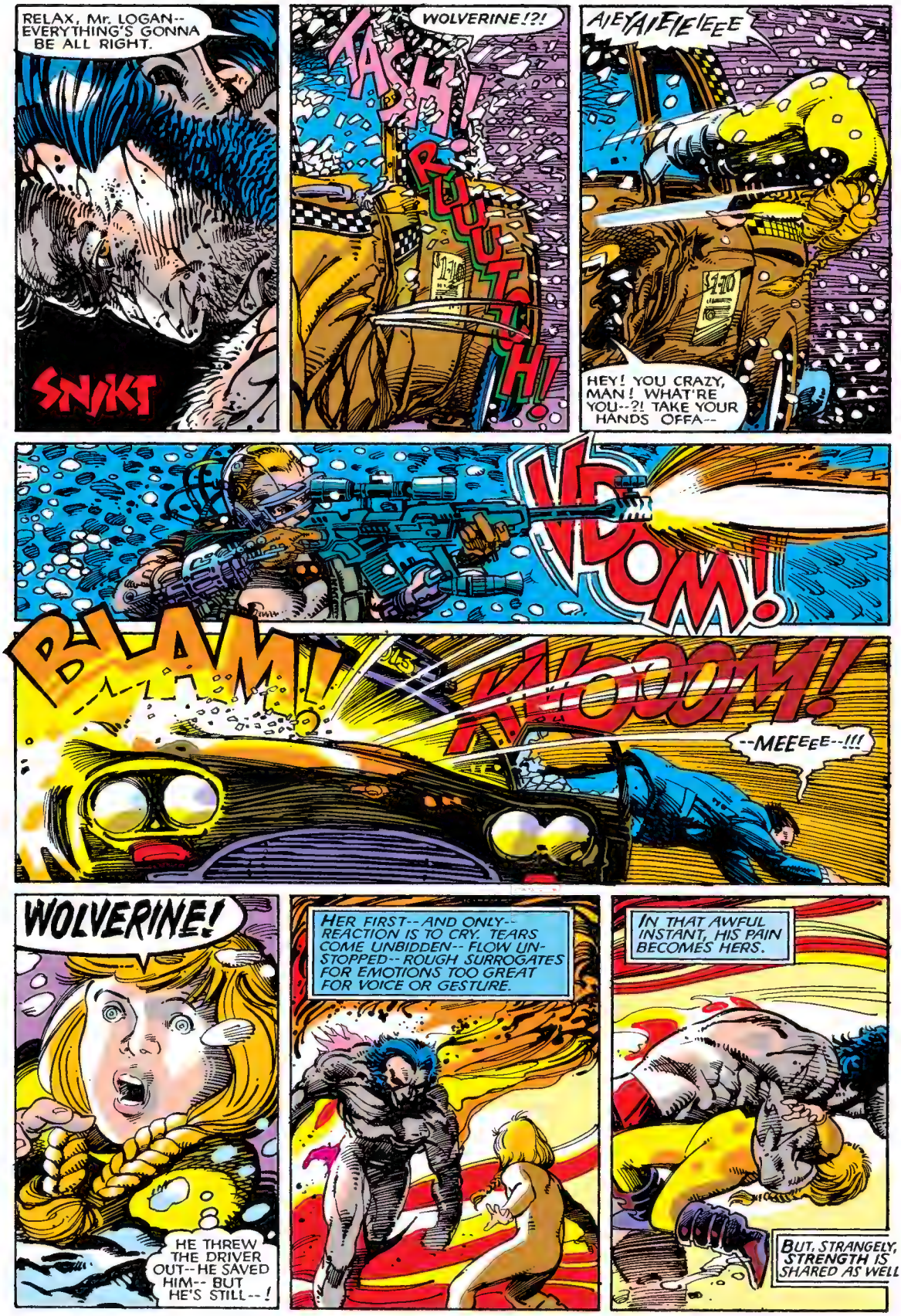
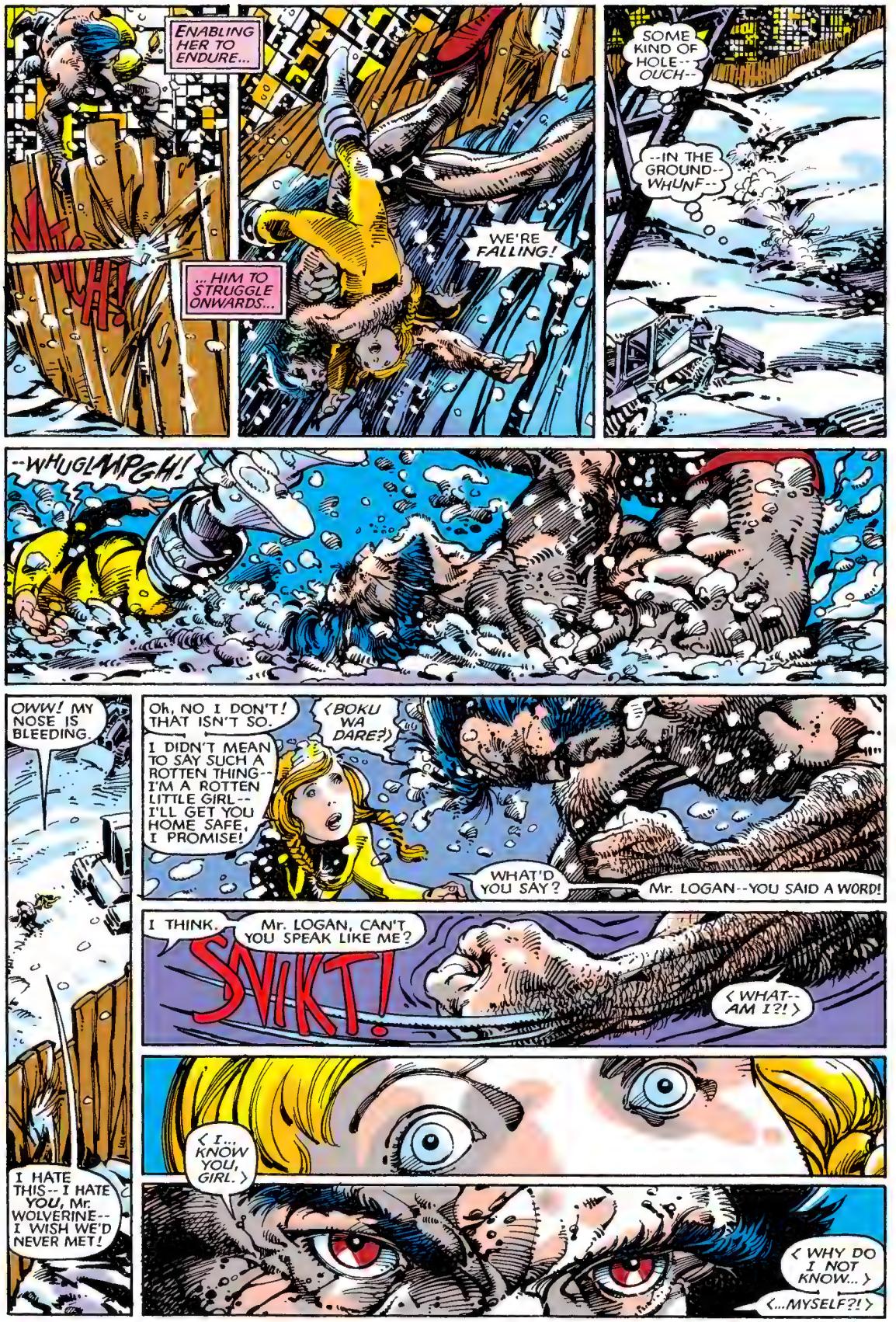

RUN WHERE YOU LIKE, WOLVERINE--
--I SHALL FOLLOW.
Mr. LOGAN, IS IT REALLY YO--
AIEAIII!
SNIKT!
YOUR DEATH WILL HELP AVENGE MY FATHER. MINE WILL BE A WELCOME RELEASE. EITHER WAY, I WIN.
THE CLAWS--
--THEY'RE... PART OF YOU!
Mr. LOGAN...
... ARE YOU GOING TO HURT ME?
EEEEOOOO
JESS-- LOOK!
POLICE-MEN!
THEY'LL HELP ME--
-- BUT WHAT ABOUT Mr. LOGAN? HAS HE DONE SOMETHING WRONG?!
WILL THEY ARREST HIM?!!
RRRR
OKAY, BUDDY-- STEP AWAY FROM THE GIRL.
WE GOT A CRAZY HERE, SID-- LISTEN TO THE GUY, HE'S GROWLING!
HEY! LEGGO!!
PUT HER DOWN!
TAKE IT EASY, FELLA. NO ONE'S GONNA HURT-!
HE'S RUNNING! ANN, CALL FOR BACK-UPS!
Mr. WOLVERINE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
THIS IS WRONG! THOSE POLICEMEN WERE FRIENDS!!
YOU'RE HOLDING TOO TIGHT-- IT HURTS! PUT ME DOWN!!!

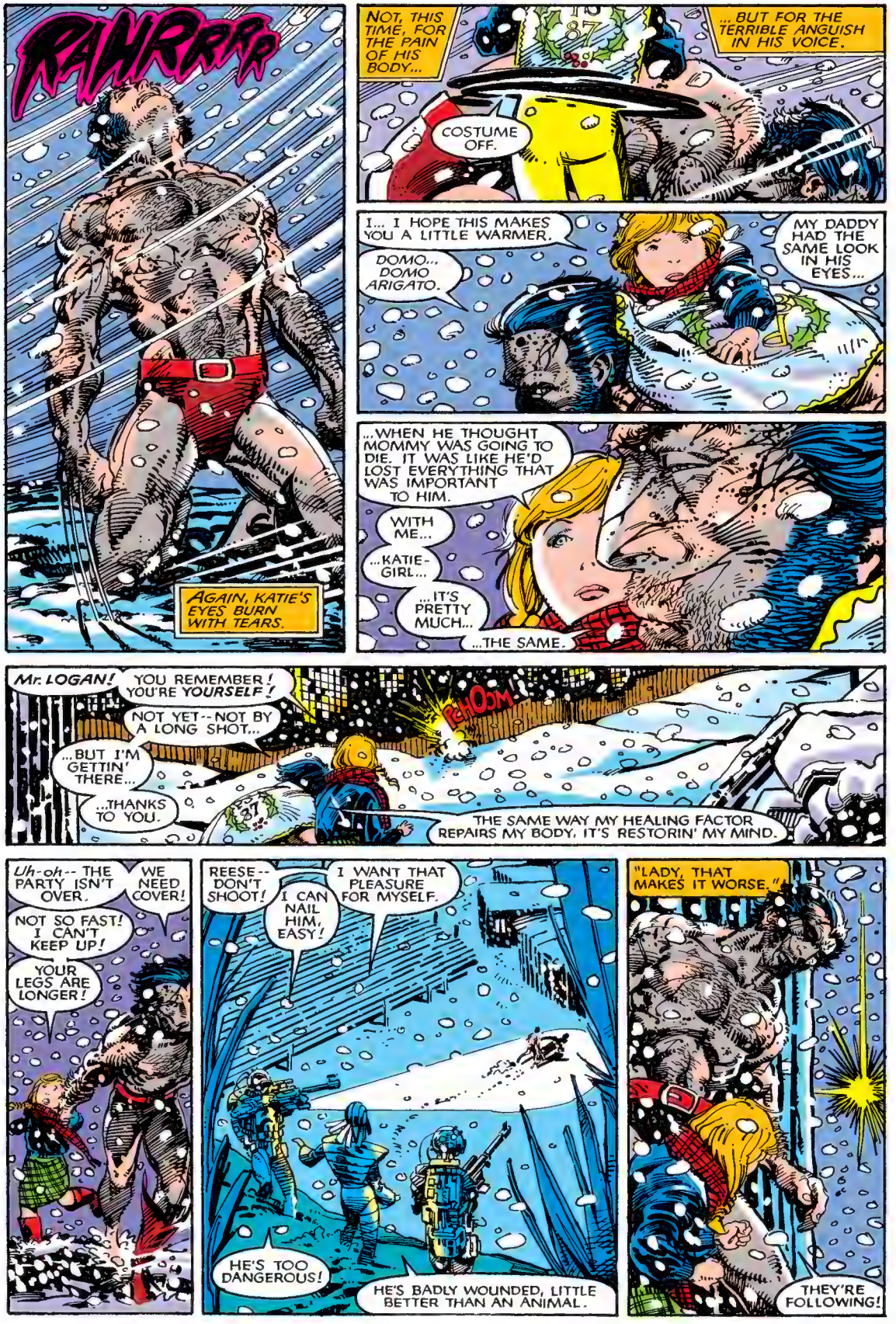

STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT!
I KEEP HITTING BUT HE DOESN'T NOTICE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIEND!
PLEASE, YOU'RE SCARING ME!
I WILL NOT BE SCARED!
A BABY GETS SCARED--
--AND I'M NO BABY!
I'M ENERGIZER--
--PART OF POWER PACK!
ZPOW!
I FIRED OFF THE BIGGEST POWER BALL I COULD...
... AN' BLEW IT UP RIGHT IN FRONT OF US--
-- THAT MADE HIM DROP ME!
IEUCKH-- I GOT SNOW IN MY BOOTS. I'M WET-- AN' I'M COLD!
I BETTER RUN AWAY WHILE I CAN.
BUT FIRST...
... I'LL DISINTEGRATE THIS GARBAGE CAN, TO POWER MYSELF UP IN CASE I NEED TO FIRE ANOTHER POWER BALL.
I BETTER GET OUT OF MY SCHOOL CLOTHES, TOO.
COSTUME ON!
IF HE MAKES A MOVE, I'LL... I'LL...
BUT HOW CAN I? HE'S AN X-MAN-- A HERO-- A... FRIEND.
FRIENDS DON'T HURT FRIENDS, Mr. LOGAN. WHY DID YOU? WHAT'S WRONG?!
DON'T YOU KNOW ME?
Mr. LOGAN...
... ARE YOU SICK?

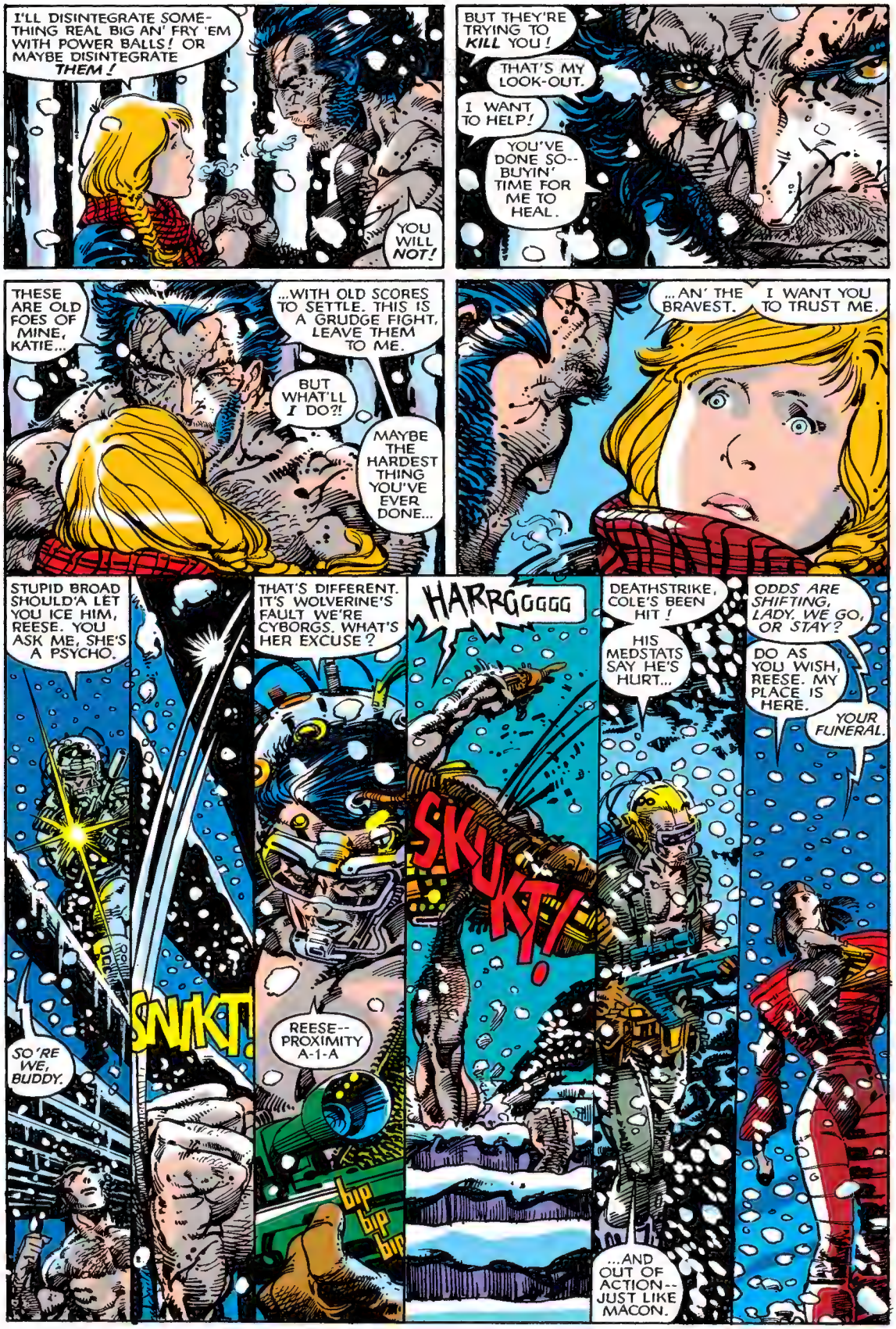

HE'S COVERED IN BLOOD!
HE'S BEEN HURT!
WAS IT THOSE GUYS WHO HIT ME AN' MISS RANDOLPH?! DID THEY BEAT YOU UP, Mr. WOLVERINE?!
C'MON--WE GOTTA FIND SOMEBODY TO HELP US...
... OR A PLACE TO HIDE.
IT'S SNOWING SO HARD I CAN BARELY SEE! WHAT STREET IS THIS?!
I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE, OR WHICH WAY TO GO!!
HE WON'T ANSWER ME. ALL HE DOES IS MAKE GROWLY NOISES...
...LIKE AN ANIMAL.
HOW CAN ANYONE BE HURT SO BAD...
RRR
...THEY EVEN FORGET HOW TO TALK?!
OH!
WOLVERINE SNARLED--THOSE MUST BE THE BAD GUYS!
THEY'LL CATCH US IF YOU KEEP CRAWLING, Mr. LOGAN!
YOU GOTTA GET UP!
PLEASE! TRY!!
THAT'S IT!
WHAT IF HE FALLS?
HE'S TOO HEAVY FOR ME TO LIFT, OR DRAG AWAY!
"THEY'RE COMING CLOSER!
"HAVE THEY SEEN US?!
LET'S GO!

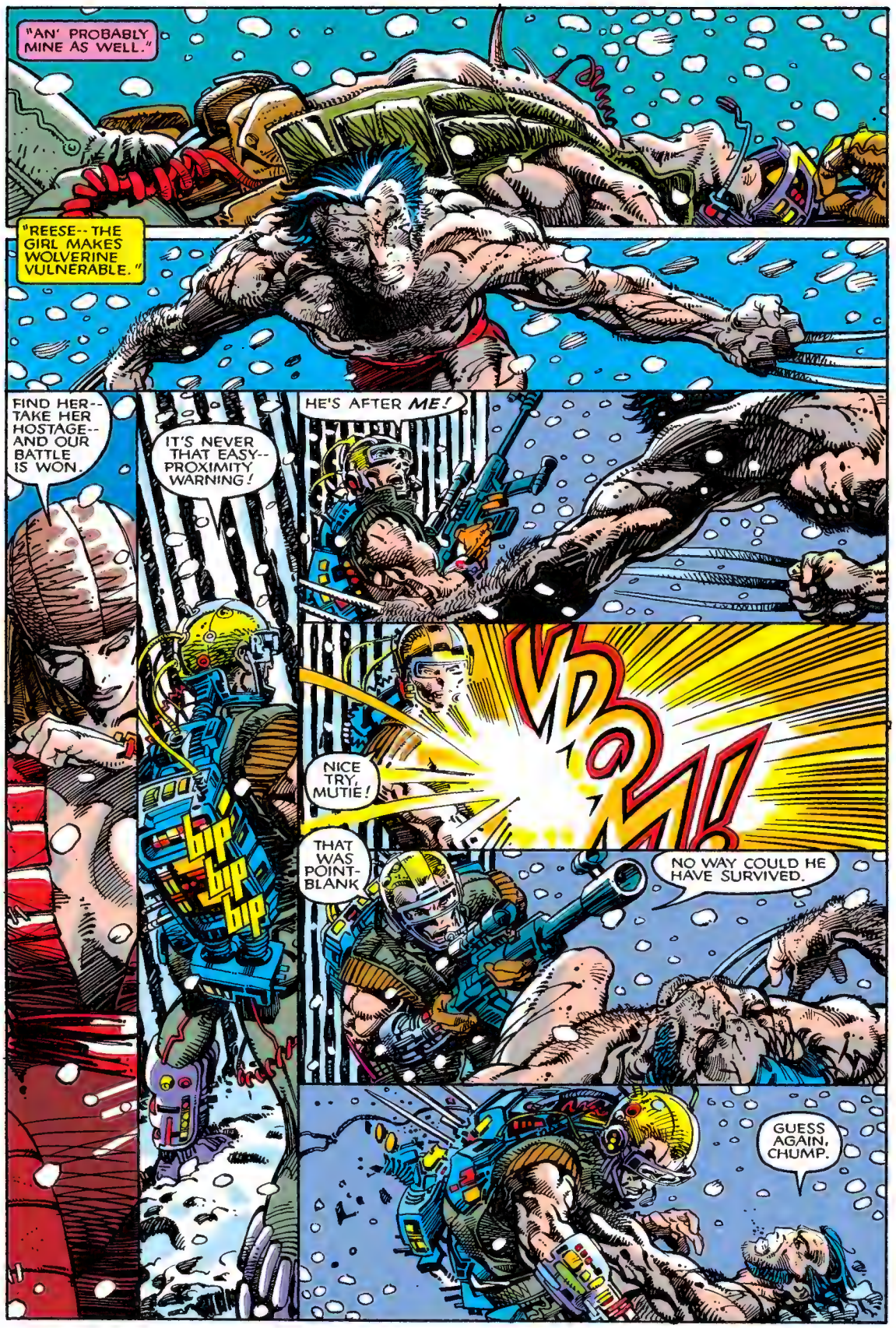

WHERE'S A TELEPHONE?! IF I FOUND ONE, I COULD CALL POWER PACK TO RESCUE US, OR WOLVERINE'S TEAMMATES, THE X-MEN.
SHOULD I LEAVE HIM...
... AND GO LOOK FOR ONE?
SUPPOSE I GET LOST FROM WOLVERINE THEN, AND CAN'T FIND MY WAY BACK?
I BET I MISSED THE CAROL SINGING.
DARN IT!
I PRACTICED SO HARD. THIS IS YOUR FAULT, MR. WOLVERINE!!
EVERYBODY MUST'A GONE HOME, 'CAUSE OF THE STORM. THE WHOLE CITY'S PROBABLY EMPTY.
A TAXICAB?! WE'RE SAVED!!
YO, SWEETHEART! THIS AIN'T THE NIGHT FOR A STROLL.
MISTER, WAIT! PLEASE--
STOP!
PLEASE-- MY UNCLE-- SOME NASTY PEOPLE BEAT HIM UP!
DID A PRETTY FAIR JOB, TOO...
...BY THE LOOK'A HIM, POOR DEVIL.
HE IS NOT A DEVIL!
EVEN IF HE'S AS SCARY AS ONE.
JUST AN EXPRESSION, YOUNGSTER, DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT.
ROADS ARE THE PITS TONIGHT, BUT I'LL GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL.
THANK YOU.
PLEASE HURRY! I THINK THEY'RE FOLLOWING!

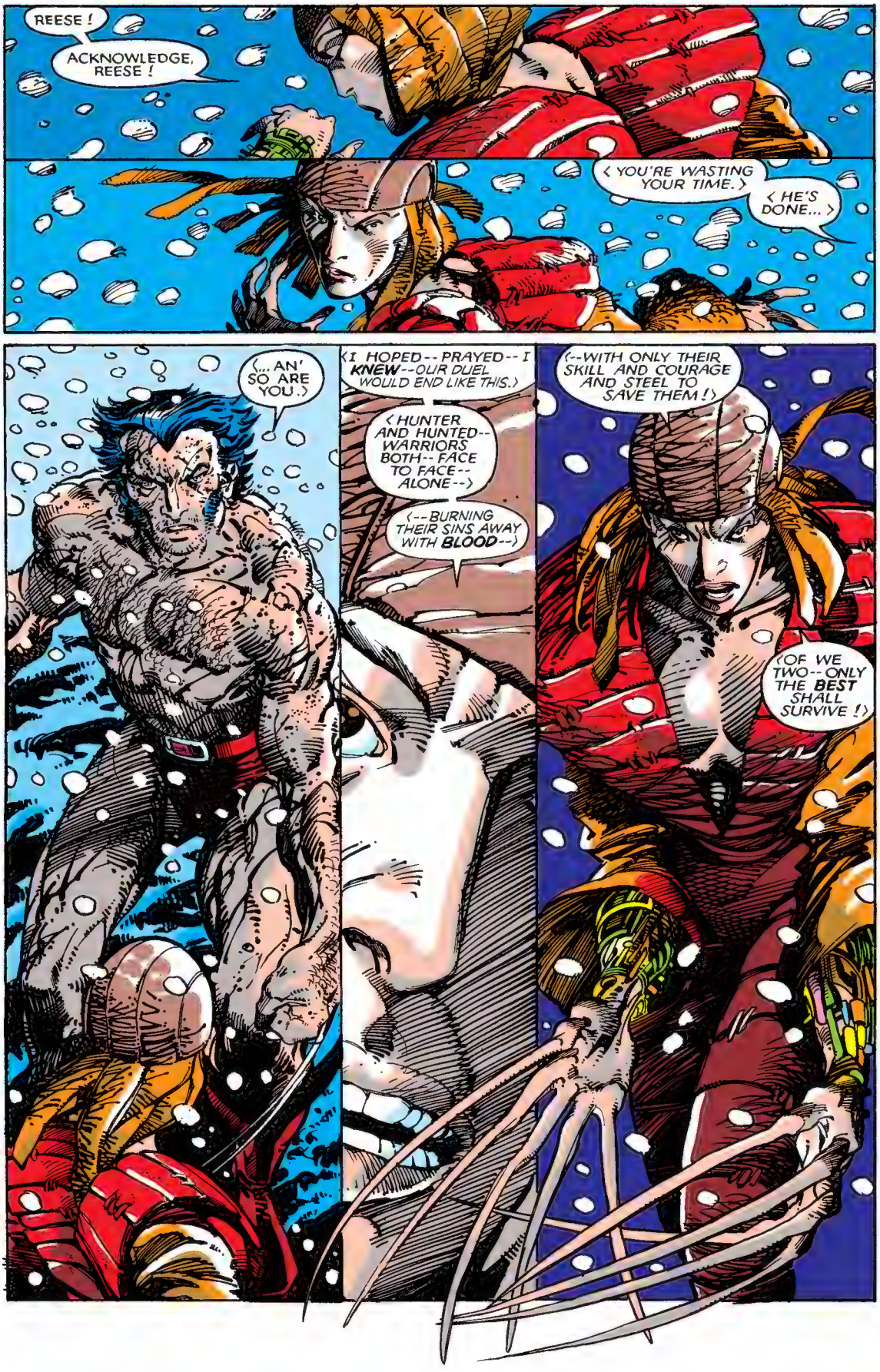

RELAX, Mr. LOGAN-- EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.
SNIKT
WOLVERINE!?!
TASH!
RUUUTCH!
AIEYAIEIEIEEE
HEY! YOU CRAZY, MAN! WHAT'RE YOU--?! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFFA--
VROOM!
BLAM!
KABOOM!
--MEEEEE--!!!
WOLVERINE!
HE THREW THE DRIVER OUT--HE SAVED HIM-- BUT HE'S STILL--!
HER FIRST--AND ONLY-- REACTION IS TO CRY. TEARS COME UNBIDDEN-- FLOW UNSTOPPED-- ROUGH SURROGATES FOR EMOTIONS TOO GREAT FOR VOICE OR GESTURE.
IN THAT AWFUL INSTANT, HIS PAIN BECOMES HERS.
BUT, STRANGELY, STRENGTH IS SHARED AS WELL.

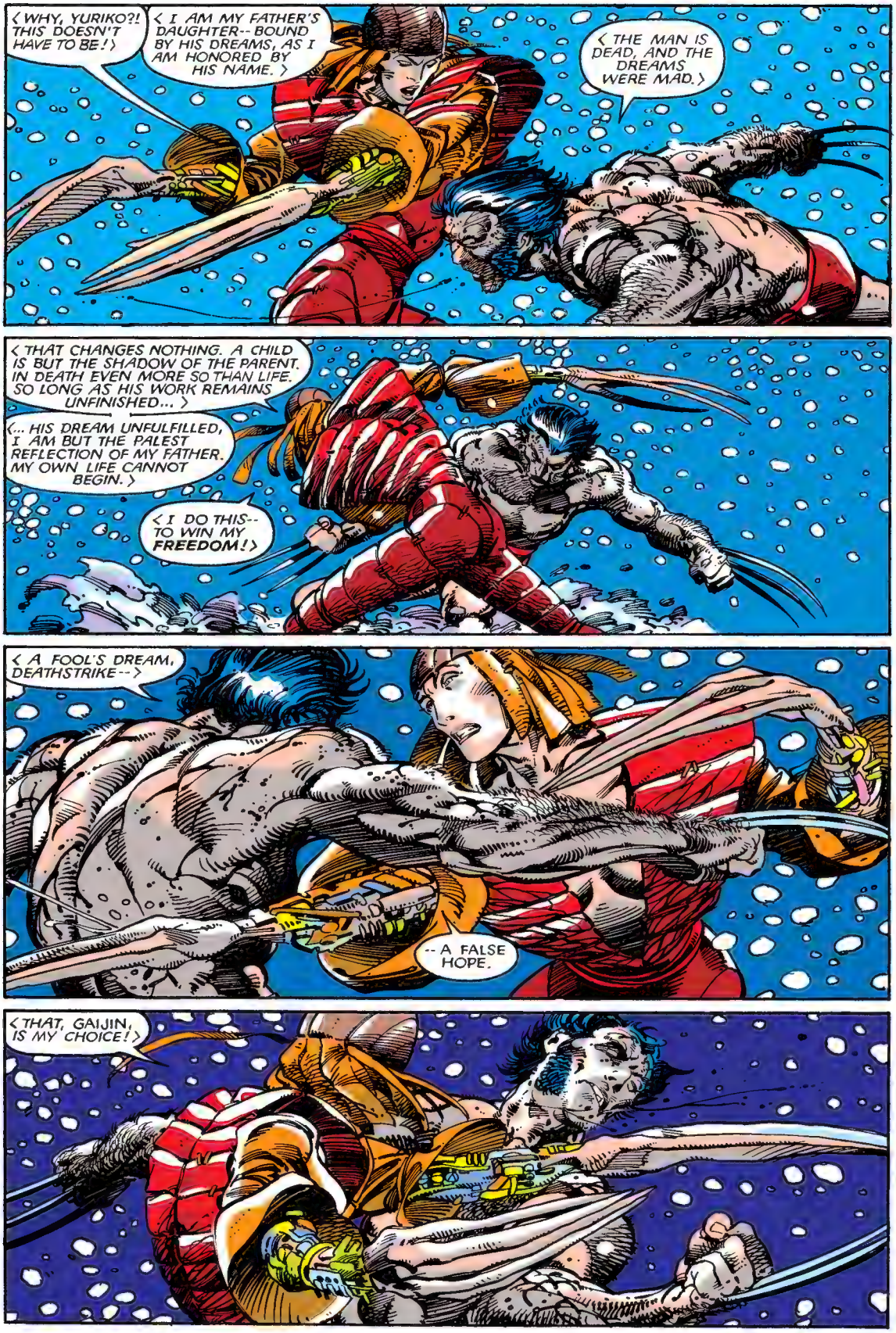

ENABLING HER TO ENDURE...
...HIM TO STRUGGLE ONWARDS...
WE'RE FALLING!
SOME KIND OF HOLE--OUCH--
--IN THE GROUND--WHUNF--
--WHUGLAMPGH!
OWW! MY NOSE IS BLEEDING.
I HATE THIS-- I HATE YOU, Mr. WOLVERINE-- I WISH WE'D NEVER MET!
Oh, NO I DON'T! THAT ISN'T SO.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY SUCH A ROTTEN THING-- I'M A ROTTEN LITTLE GIRL-- I'LL GET YOU HOME SAFE, I PROMISE!
(BOKU WA DARE?)
WHAT'D YOU SAY?
Mr. LOGAN--YOU SAID A WORD!
I THINK...
Mr. LOGAN, CAN'T YOU SPEAK LIKE ME?
SNIKT!
(WHAT-- AM I?!)
(I... KNOW YOU, GIRL.)
(WHY DO I NOT KNOW...)
(...MYSELF?!)

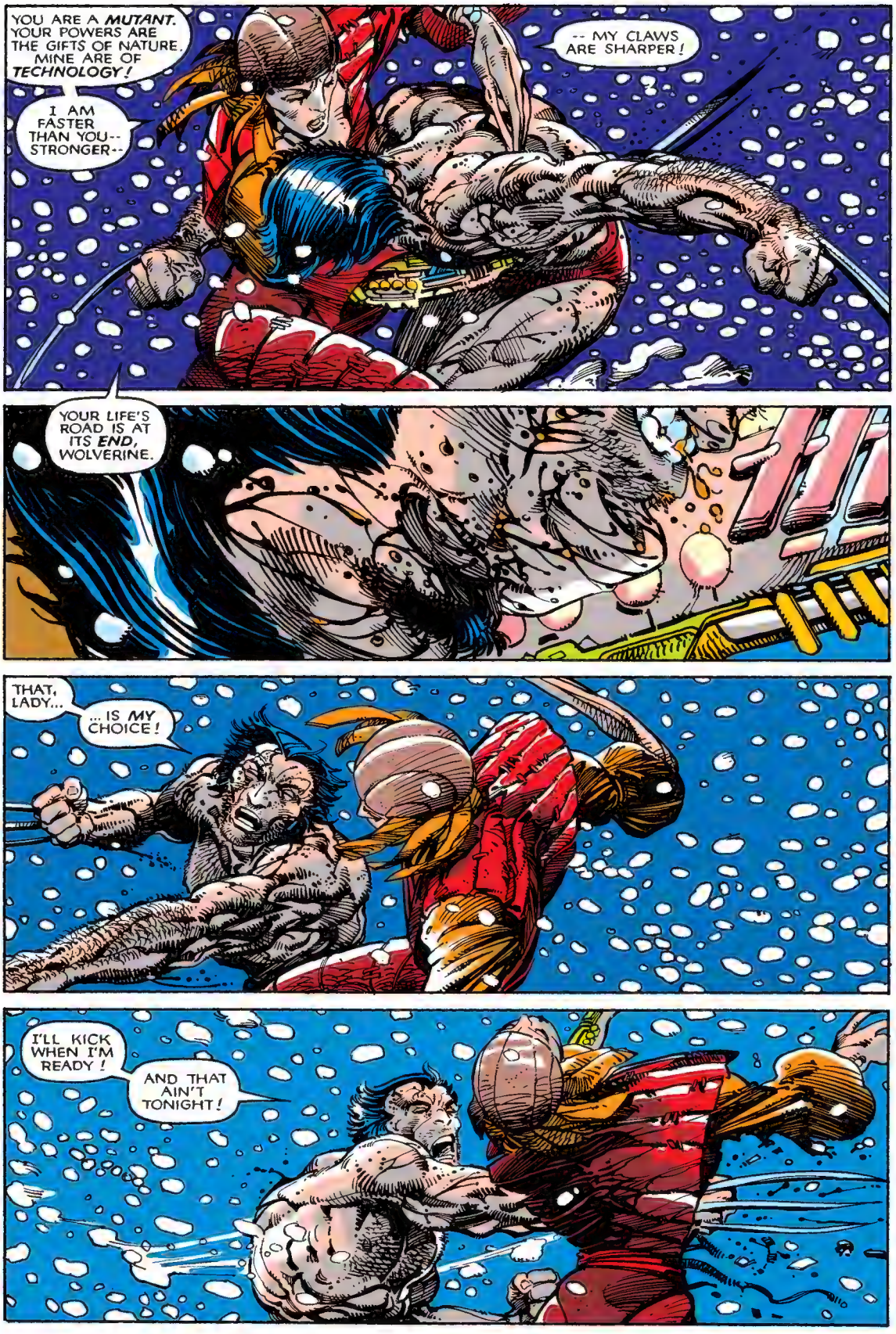

RAHRRR
AGAIN, KATIE'S EYES BURN WITH TEARS.
NOT, THIS TIME, FOR THE PAIN OF HIS BODY...
...BUT FOR THE TERRIBLE ANGUISH IN HIS VOICE.
COSTUME OFF.
I... I HOPE THIS MAKES YOU A LITTLE WARMER.
DOMO... DOMO ARIGATO.
MY DADDY HAD THE SAME LOOK IN HIS EYES...
...WHEN HE THOUGHT MOMMY WAS GOING TO DIE. IT WAS LIKE HE'D LOST EVERYTHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM.
WITH ME...
...KATIE-GIRL...
...IT'S PRETTY MUCH...
...THE SAME.
Mr. LOGAN!
YOU REMEMBER! YOU'RE YOURSELF!
NOT YET--NOT BY A LONG SHOT...
...BUT I'M GETTIN' THERE...
...THANKS TO YOU.
KEHOOM!
THE SAME WAY MY HEALING FACTOR REPAIRS MY BODY, IT'S RESTORIN' MY MIND.
Uh-oh-- THE PARTY ISN'T OVER.
WE NEED COVER!
NOT SO FAST! I CAN'T KEEP UP!
YOUR LEGS ARE LONGER!
REESE-- DON'T SHOOT!
I CAN NAIL HIM, EASY!
I WANT THAT PLEASURE FOR MYSELF.
HE'S TOO DANGEROUS!
HE'S BADLY WOUNDED, LITTLE BETTER THAN AN ANIMAL.
"LADY, THAT MAKES IT WORSE."
THEY'RE FOLLOWING!

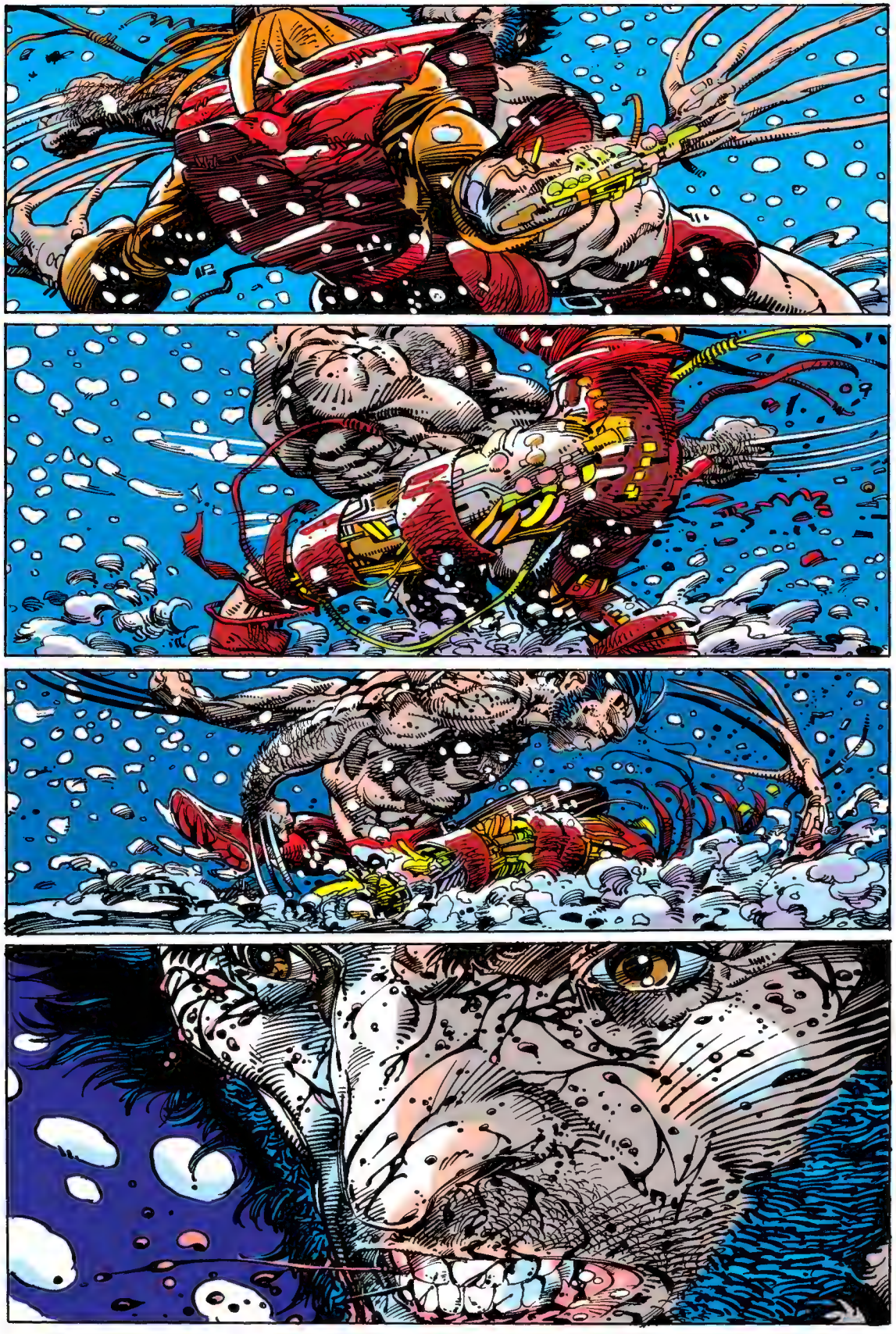

I'LL DISINTEGRATE SOMETHING REAL BIG AN' FRY 'EM WITH POWER BALLS! OR MAYBE DISINTEGRATE THEM!
YOU WILL NOT!
BUT THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL YOU!
THAT'S MY LOOK-OUT.
I WANT TO HELP!
YOU'VE DONE SO-- BUYIN' TIME FOR ME TO HEAL.
THESE ARE OLD FOES OF MINE, KATIE...
...WITH OLD SCORES TO SETTLE. THIS IS A GRUDGE FIGHT, LEAVE THEM TO ME.
BUT WHAT'LL I DO?!
MAYBE THE HARDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE...
...AN' THE BRAVEST.
I WANT YOU TO TRUST ME.
STUPID BROAD SHOULD'A LET YOU ICE HIM, REESE. YOU ASK ME, SHE'S A PSYCHO.
SO'RE WE, BUDDY.
SNIKT!
THAT'S DIFFERENT. IT'S WOLVERINE'S FAULT WE'RE CYBORGS. WHAT'S HER EXCUSE?
REESE-- PROXIMITY A-1-A
bip bip bip
HARRGGGGG
SKUKT!
DEATHSTRIKE, COLE'S BEEN HIT!
HIS MEDSTATS SAY HE'S HURT...
...AND OUT OF ACTION-- JUST LIKE MACON.
ODDS ARE SHIFTING, LADY. WE GO, OR STAY?
DO AS YOU WISH, REESE. MY PLACE IS HERE.
YOUR FUNERAL.


"AN' PROBABLY MINE AS WELL."
"REESE--THE GIRL MAKES WOLVERINE VULNERABLE."
FIND HER--TAKE HER HOSTAGE--AND OUR BATTLE IS WON.
IT'S NEVER THAT EASY--PROXIMITY WARNING!
bip bip bip
HE'S AFTER ME!
VBOOM!
NICE TRY, MUTIE!
THAT WAS POINT-BLANK
NO WAY COULD HE HAVE SURVIVED.
GUESS AGAIN, CHUMP.

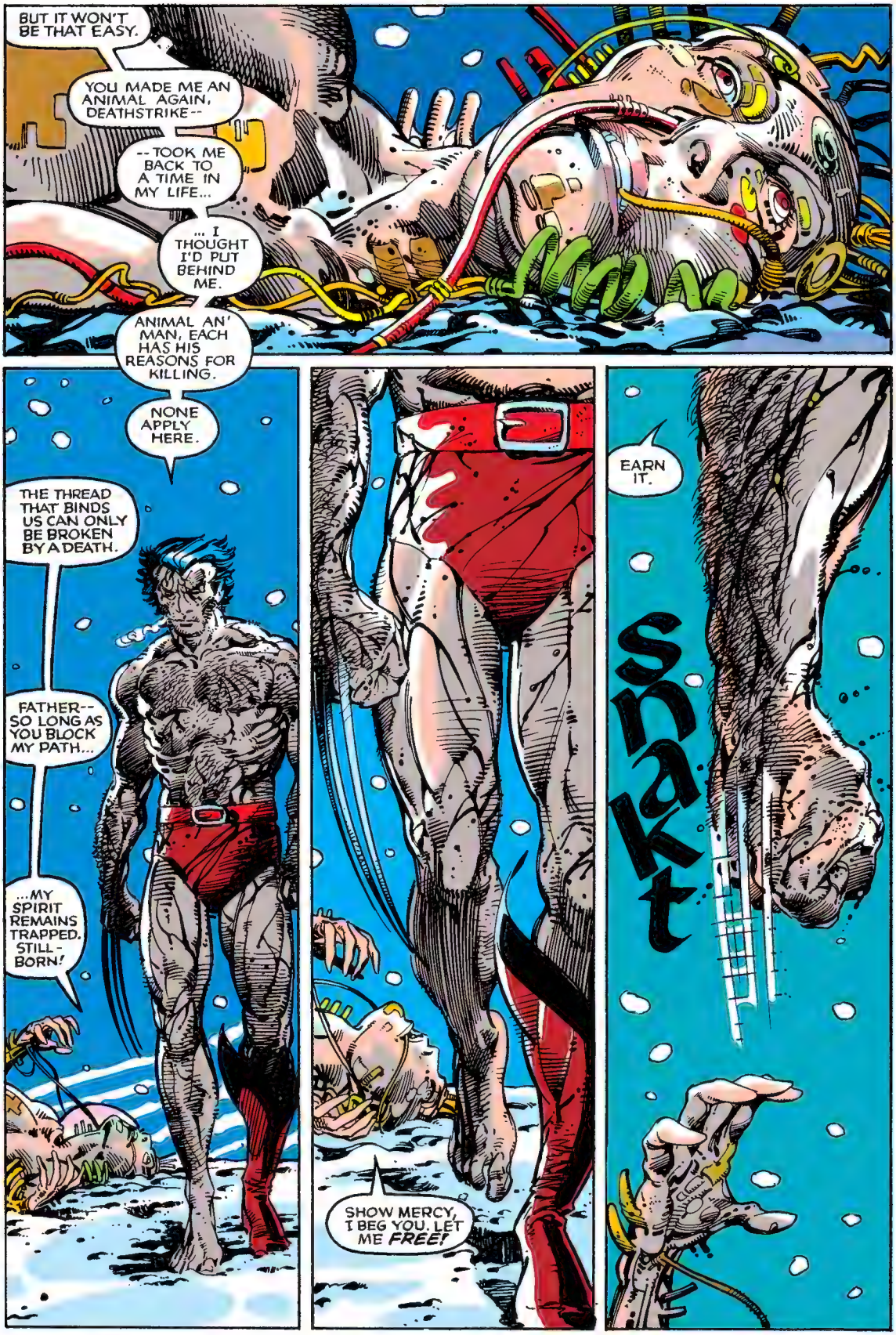

REESE !
ACKNOWLEDGE, REESE !
〈 YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME. 〉
〈 HE'S DONE... 〉
〈... AN' SO ARE YOU.〉
〈I HOPED -- PRAYED -- I KNEW --OUR DUEL WOULD END LIKE THIS.〉
〈 HUNTER AND HUNTED-- WARRIORS BOTH-- FACE TO FACE-- ALONE--〉
〈--BURNING THEIR SINS AWAY WITH BLOOD--〉
〈--WITH ONLY THEIR SKILL AND COURAGE AND STEEL TO SAVE THEM !〉
〈OF WE TWO-- ONLY THE BEST SHALL SURVIVE !〉

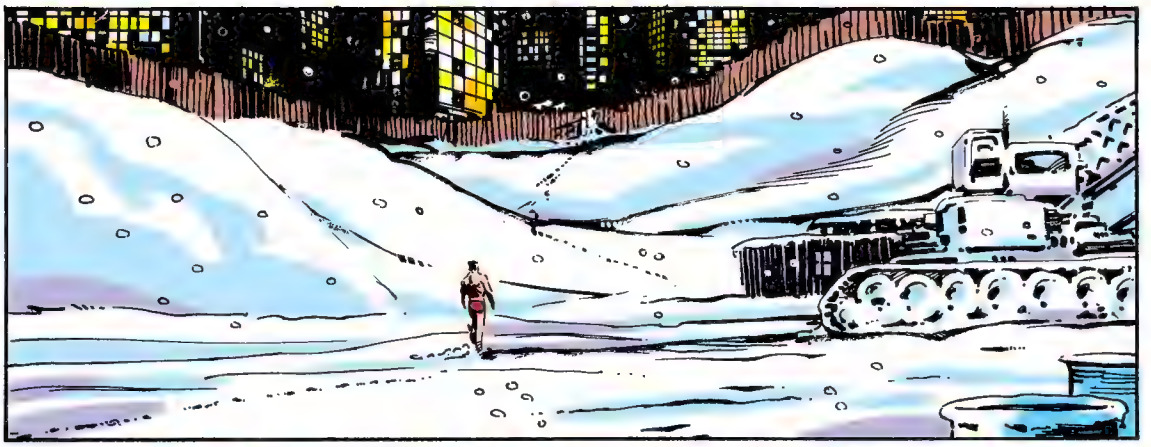

〈WHY, YURIKO?! THIS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE!〉
〈I AM MY FATHER'S DAUGHTER-- BOUND BY HIS DREAMS, AS I AM HONORED BY HIS NAME.〉
〈THE MAN IS DEAD, AND THE DREAMS WERE MAD.〉
〈THAT CHANGES NOTHING. A CHILD IS BUT THE SHADOW OF THE PARENT. IN DEATH EVEN MORE SO THAN LIFE. SO LONG AS HIS WORK REMAINS UNFINISHED...〉
〈... HIS DREAM UNFULFILLED, I AM BUT THE PALEST REFLECTION OF MY FATHER. MY OWN LIFE CANNOT BEGIN.〉
〈I DO THIS-- TO WIN MY FREEDOM!〉
〈A FOOL'S DREAM, DEATHSTRIKE--〉
-- A FALSE HOPE.
〈THAT, GAIJIN, IS MY CHOICE!〉

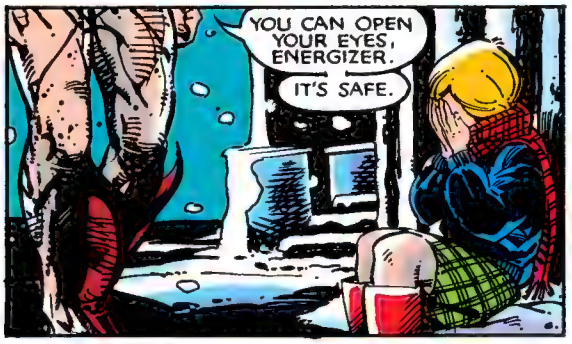

YOU ARE A MUTANT. YOUR POWERS ARE THE GIFTS OF NATURE. MINE ARE OF TECHNOLOGY!
I AM FASTER THAN YOU-- STRONGER--
-- MY CLAWS ARE SHARPER!
YOUR LIFE'S ROAD IS AT ITS END, WOLVERINE.
THAT, LADY...
... IS MY CHOICE!
I'LL KICK WHEN I'M READY!
AND THAT AIN'T TONIGHT!

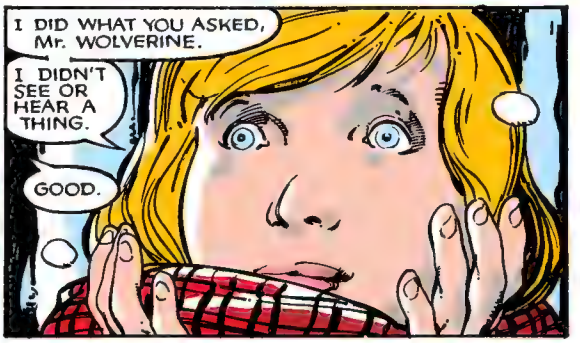


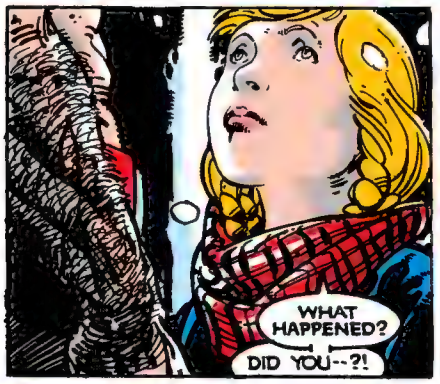
MY GOD.
YURIKO--?!!
IT... WAS NECESSARY...
...TO BECOME LIKE YOU...
THE BETTER TO SLAY ME?!
MY HEALING FACTOR MAKES ME A MUTANT. LACING MY BONES WITH ADAMANTIUM AN' GIVING ME THESE CLAWS--THAT WAS DONE TO ME.
BUT--YOU ASKED TO BE CHANGED. YOU DID THIS TO YOURSELF. THREW AWAY A HUMANITY I'D GIVE PRETTY NEAR ANYTHING TO POSSESS.
YOUR OLD MAN'D BE PROUD. YOU'RE A CARBON COPY.
WHAT A WASTE.
I HAVE LOST. WORSE, I HAVE FAILED.
MY LIFE IS FORFEIT.
THAT'D SOLVE ALL YOUR PROBLEMS, WOULDN'T IT?

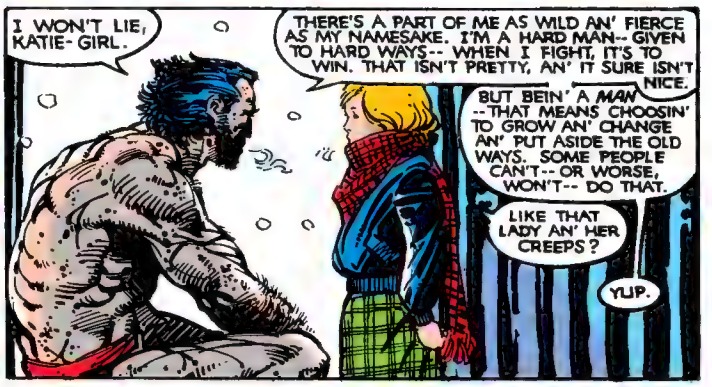

BUT IT WON'T BE THAT EASY.
YOU MADE ME AN ANIMAL AGAIN, DEATHSTRIKE--
--TOOK ME BACK TO A TIME IN MY LIFE...
... I THOUGHT I'D PUT BEHIND ME.
ANIMAL AN' MAN, EACH HAS HIS REASONS FOR KILLING.
NONE APPLY HERE.
THE THREAD THAT BINDS US CAN ONLY BE BROKEN BY A DEATH.
FATHER-- SO LONG AS YOU BLOCK MY PATH...
...MY SPIRIT REMAINS TRAPPED. STILL-BORN!
SHOW MERCY, I BEG YOU. LET ME FREE!
EARN IT.
snakt



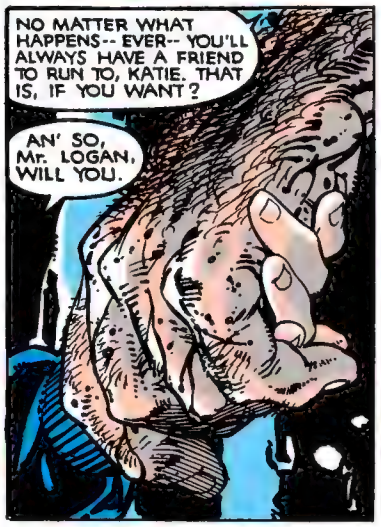

YOU CAN OPEN YOUR EYES, ENERGIZER.
IT'S SAFE.

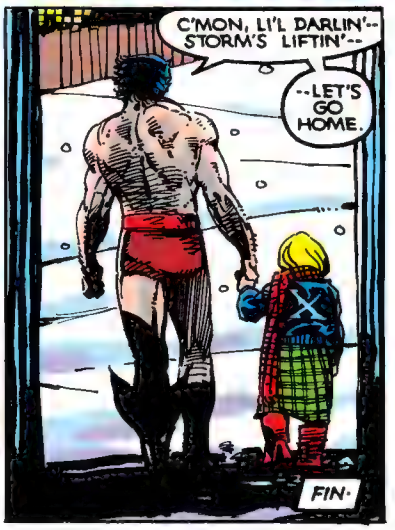

I DID WHAT YOU ASKED, Mr. WOLVERINE.
I DIDN'T SEE OR HEAR A THING.
GOOD.


WHAT HAPPENED?
DID YOU--?!


I WON'T LIE, KATIE-GIRL.
THERE'S A PART OF ME AS WILD AN' FIERCE AS MY NAMESAKE. I'M A HARD MAN-- GIVEN TO HARD WAYS-- WHEN I FIGHT, IT'S TO WIN. THAT ISN'T PRETTY, AN' IT SURE ISN'T NICE.
BUT BEIN' A MAN --THAT MEANS CHOOSIN' TO GROW AN' CHANGE AN' PUT ASIDE THE OLD WAYS. SOME PEOPLE CAN'T-- OR WORSE, WON'T-- DO THAT.
LIKE THAT LADY AN' HER CREEPS?
YUP.

THAT'S SAD.
YUP.
I WAS SCARED OF YOU, Mr. WOLVERINE.
I KNOW. ARE YOU STILL?
A... LITTLE.


NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS-- EVER-- YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A FRIEND TO RUN TO, KATIE. THAT IS, IF YOU WANT?
AN' SO, Mr. LOGAN, WILL YOU.


C'MON, LI'L DARLIN'-- STORM'S LIFTIN'--
--LET'S GO HOME.
FIN.

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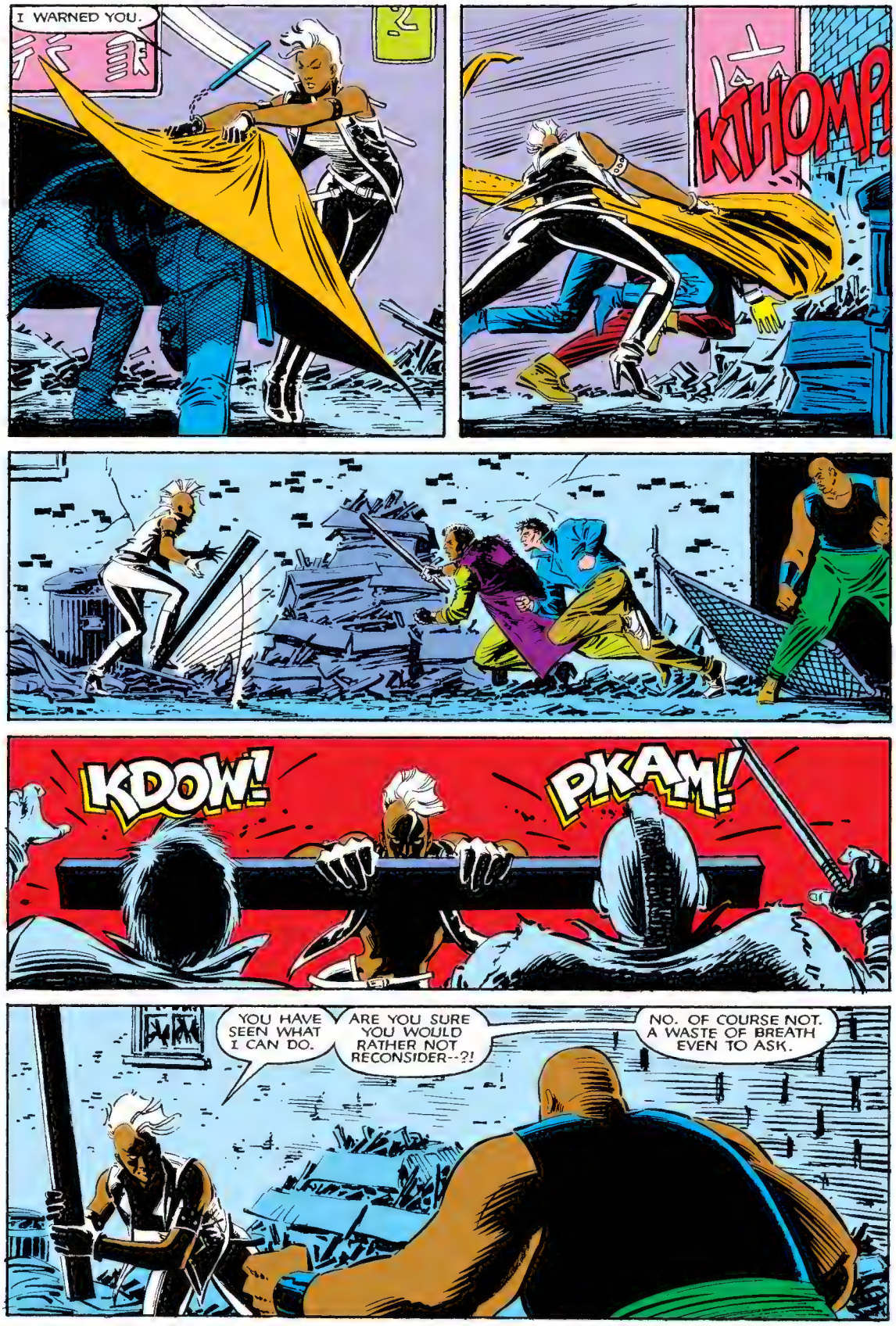
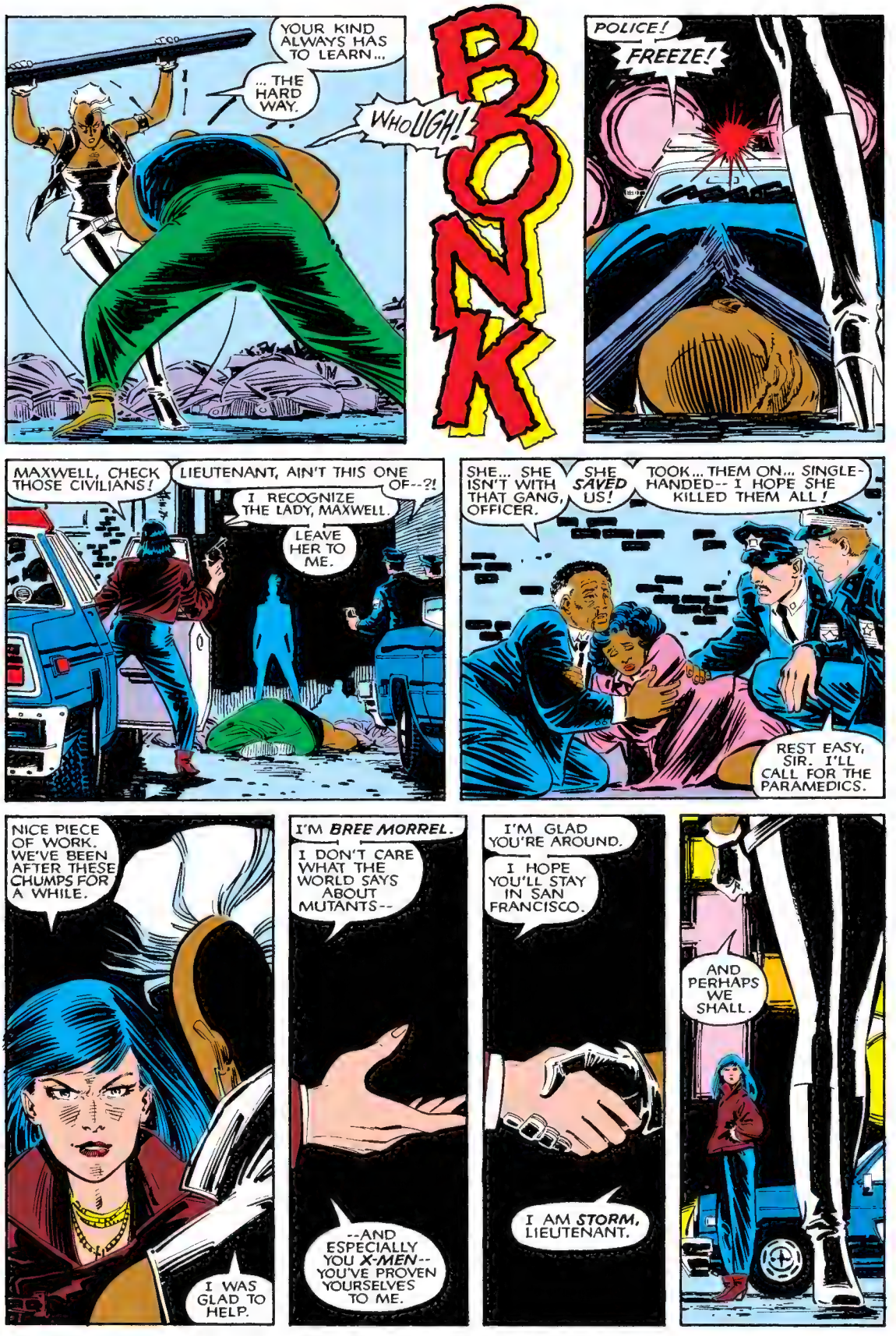
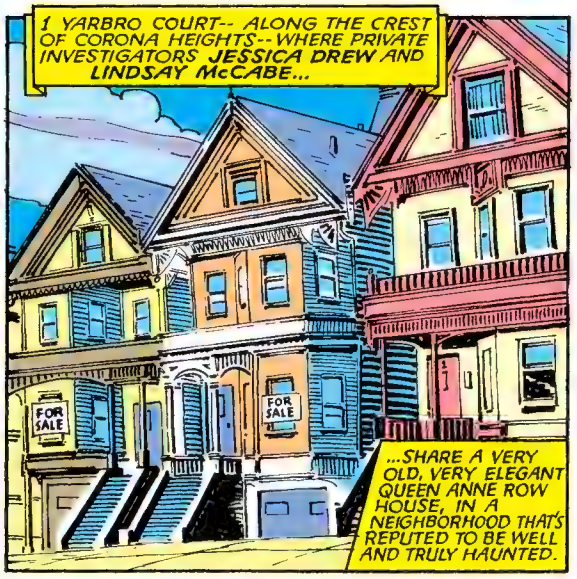
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
JR JR + AW

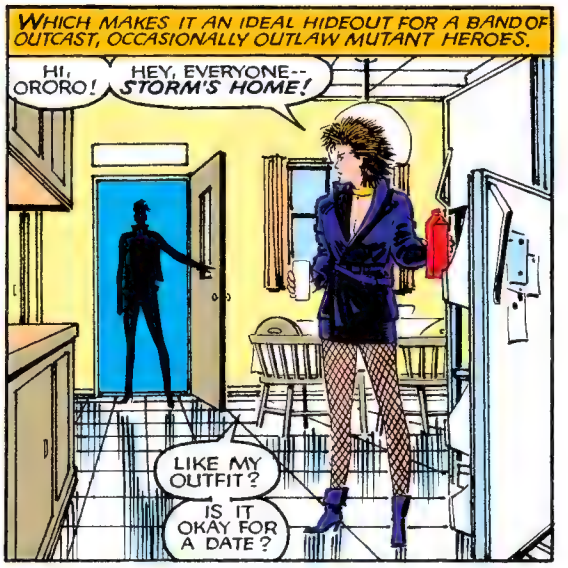
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
FREEDOM IS A FOUR LETTER WORD!
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
HAVING A GOOD TIME, BOYS?
CHRIS CLAREMONT
WRITER
JOHN ROMITA JR
'N'
DAN GREEN
ARTISTS
GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORIST
Tom Orzechowski
LETTERER
Ann Nocenti
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
CHIEF

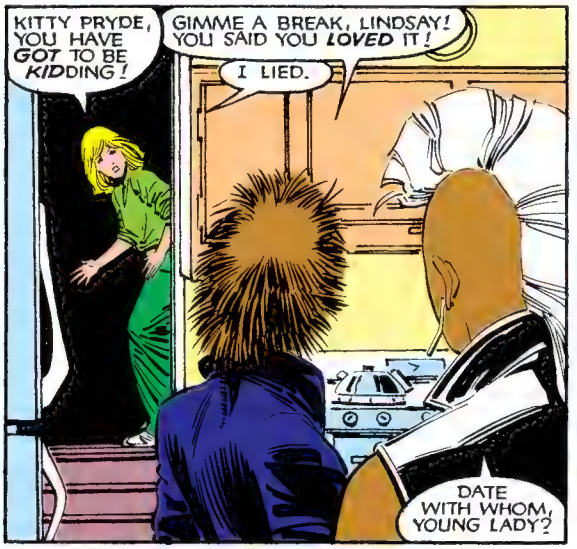
THA'S RIGHT, MOMMA!
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
YOU WANNA MAKE SOMETHIN' OF IT?!
OR MAYBE JOIN IN?!
I SUGGEST YOU LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS...
...WHILE YOU ARE STILL ABLE.
OR WHAT?!
TOUGH TALK, SWEETS.
THAT A THREAT?
WE DON' RESPOND TOO WELL TO THREATS, CHICA.
THIS IS OUR TURF.
WE DO AS WE PLEASE.
TO WHOMEVER WE PLEASE.
YOU CHALLENGE US, BABE--
-- YOU GONNA REGRET IT!
TAKE HER!
FOOLISH BOYS.

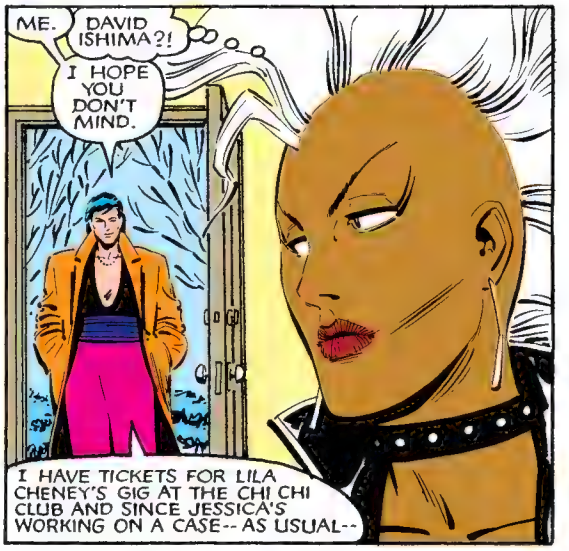

I WARNED YOU.
KTHOMP!
KDOW!
PKAM!
YOU HAVE SEEN WHAT I CAN DO.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULD RATHER NOT RECONSIDER--?!
NO. OF COURSE NOT. A WASTE OF BREATH EVEN TO ASK.


YOUR KIND ALWAYS HAS TO LEARN...
... THE HARD WAY.
WHOUGH!
BONK
POLICE!
FREEZE!
MAXWELL, CHECK THOSE CIVILIANS!
LIEUTENANT, AIN'T THIS ONE OF--?!
I RECOGNIZE THE LADY, MAXWELL.
LEAVE HER TO ME.
SHE... SHE ISN'T WITH THAT GANG, OFFICER.
SHE SAVED US!
TOOK... THEM ON... SINGLE-HANDED-- I HOPE SHE KILLED THEM ALL!
REST EASY, SIR. I'LL CALL FOR THE PARAMEDICS.
NICE PIECE OF WORK. WE'VE BEEN AFTER THESE CHUMPS FOR A WHILE.
I WAS GLAD TO HELP.
I'M BREE MORREL.
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE WORLD SAYS ABOUT MUTANTS--
--AND ESPECIALLY YOU X-MEN-- YOU'VE PROVEN YOURSELVES TO ME.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE AROUND.
I HOPE YOU'LL STAY IN SAN FRANCISCO.
I AM STORM, LIEUTENANT.
AND PERHAPS WE SHALL.

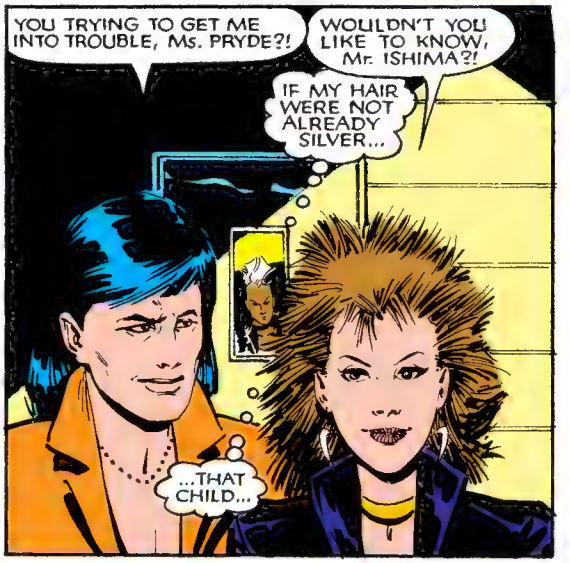

1 YARBRO COURT-- ALONG THE CREST OF CORONA HEIGHTS--WHERE PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS JESSICA DREW AND LINDSAY McCABE...
FOR SALE
FOR SALE
...SHARE A VERY OLD, VERY ELEGANT QUEEN ANNE ROW HOUSE, IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT'S REPUTED TO BE WELL AND TRULY HAUNTED.

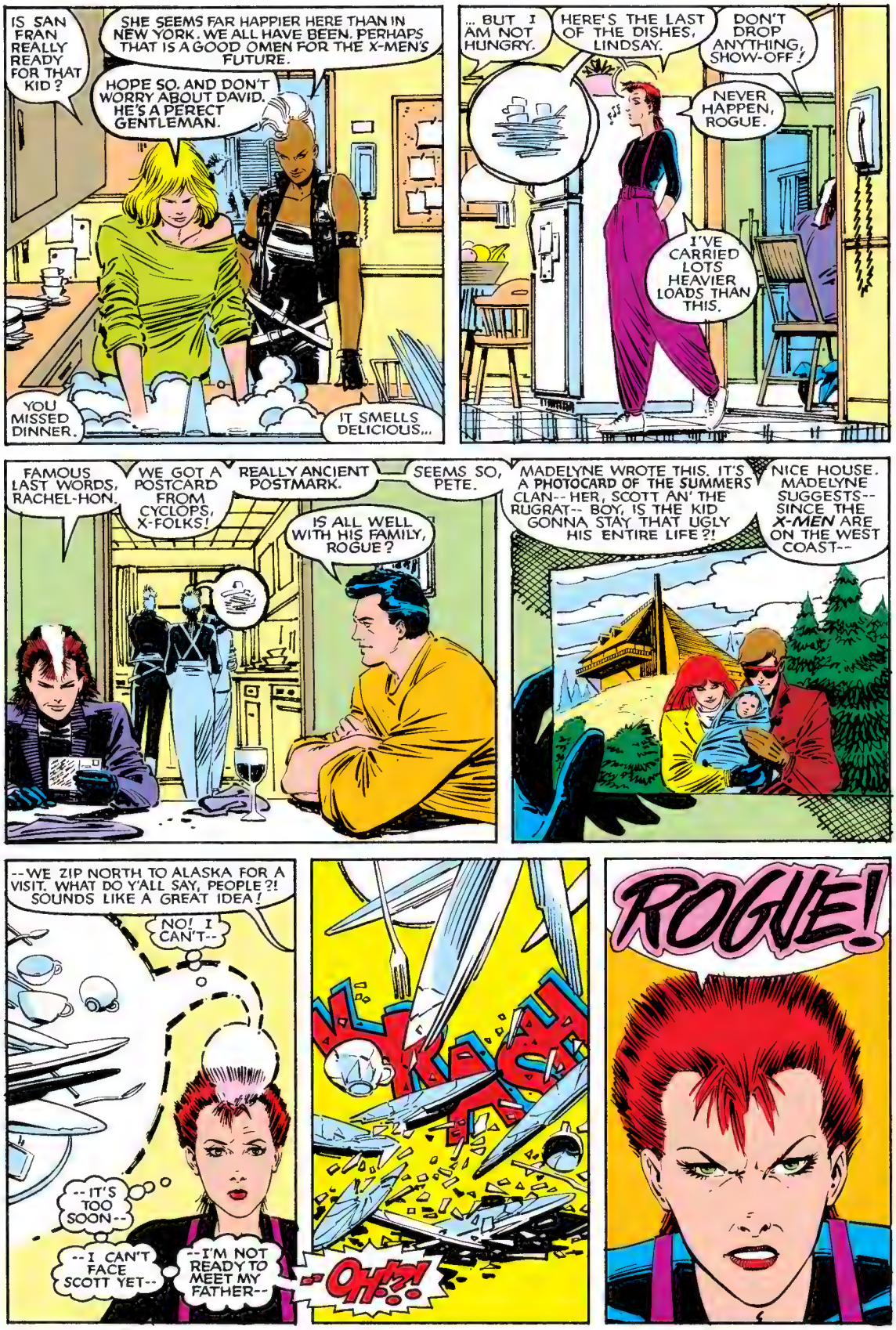

WHICH MAKES IT AN IDEAL HIDEOUT FOR A BAND OF OUTCAST, OCCASIONALLY OUTLAW MUTANT HEROES.
HI, ORORO!
HEY, EVERYONE-- STORM'S HOME!
LIKE MY OUTFIT?
IS IT OKAY FOR A DATE?


KITTY PRYDE, YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
GIMME A BREAK, LINDSAY! YOU SAID YOU LOVED IT!
I LIED.
DATE WITH WHOM, YOUNG LADY?

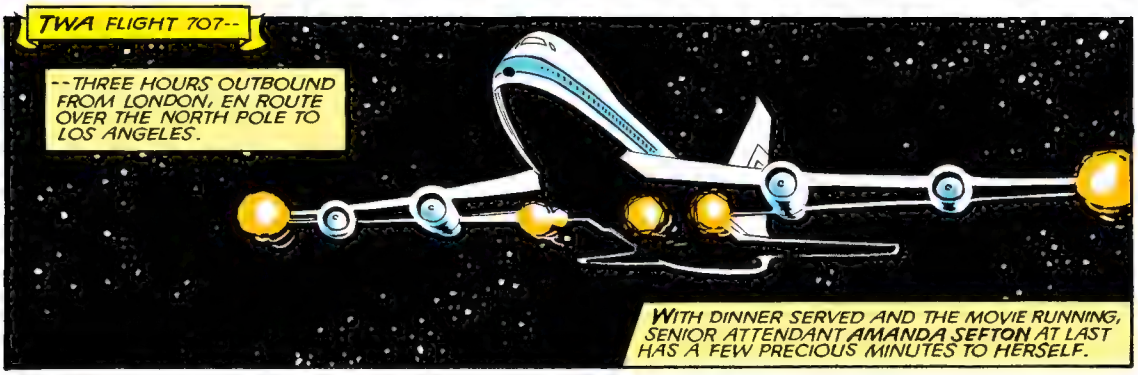

ME.
DAVID ISHIMA?!
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND.
I HAVE TICKETS FOR LILA CHENEY'S GIG AT THE CHI CHI CLUB AND SINCE JESSICA'S WORKING ON A CASE-- AS USUAL--

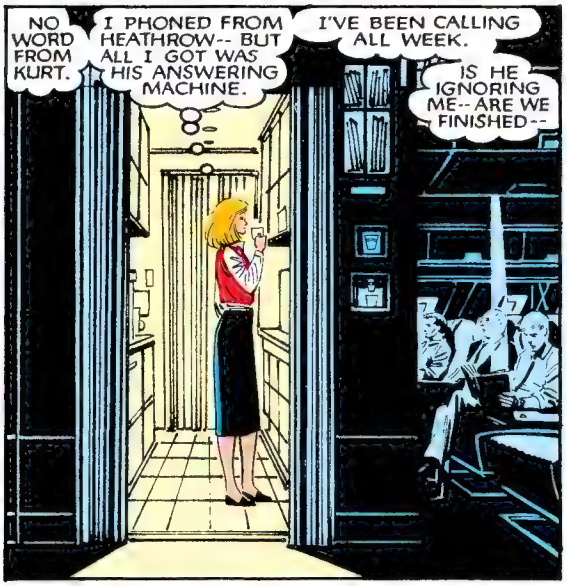
--I THOUGHT KITTY'D LIKE TO GO INSTEAD.
YOU BETCHA, TIGER!
I'LL BEHAVE MYSELF--SCOUT'S HONOR-- AND MAKE SURE SHE'S HOME SAFE AND SOUND AT A REASONABLE HOUR.
NO YOU WON'T.
YES, HE WILL.

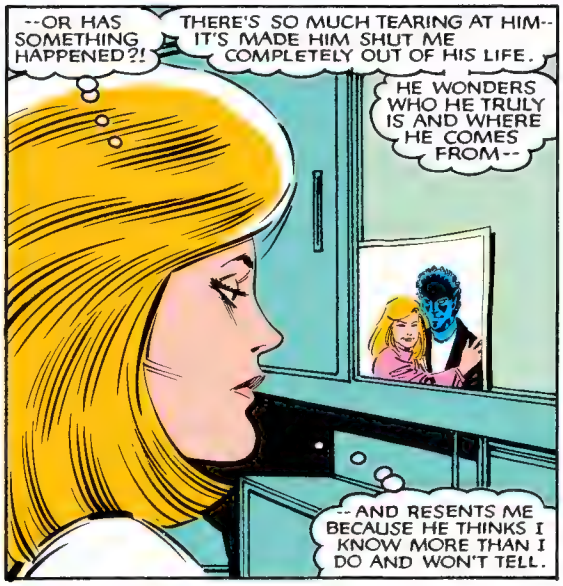

YOU TRYING TO GET ME INTO TROUBLE, Ms. PRYDE?!
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW, Mr. ISHIMA?!
IF MY HAIR WERE NOT ALREADY SILVER...
...THAT CHILD...


IS SAN FRAN REALLY READY FOR THAT KID?
SHE SEEMS FAR HAPPIER HERE THAN IN NEW YORK. WE ALL HAVE BEEN. PERHAPS THAT IS A GOOD OMEN FOR THE X-MEN'S FUTURE.
HOPE SO. AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT DAVID. HE'S A PERECT GENTLEMAN.
YOU MISSED DINNER.
IT SMELLS DELICIOUS...
... BUT I AM NOT HUNGRY.
HERE'S THE LAST OF THE DISHES, LINDSAY.
DON'T DROP ANYTHING, SHOW-OFF!
NEVER HAPPEN, ROGUE.
I'VE CARRIED LOTS HEAVIER LOADS THAN THIS.
FAMOUS LAST WORDS, RACHEL-HON.
WE GOT A POSTCARD FROM CYCLOPS, X-FOLKS!
REALLY ANCIENT POSTMARK.
SEEMS SO, PETE.
IS ALL WELL WITH HIS FAMILY, ROGUE?
MADELYNE WROTE THIS. IT'S A PHOTOCARD OF THE SUMMERS CLAN-- HER, SCOTT AN' THE RUGRAT-- BOY, IS THE KID GONNA STAY THAT UGLY HIS ENTIRE LIFE?!
NICE HOUSE. MADELYNE SUGGESTS-- SINCE THE X-MEN ARE ON THE WEST COAST--
--WE ZIP NORTH TO ALASKA FOR A VISIT. WHAT DO Y'ALL SAY, PEOPLE?! SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT IDEA!
NO! I CAN'T--
--IT'S TOO SOON--
--I CAN'T FACE SCOTT YET--
--I'M NOT READY TO MEET MY FATHER--
OH!?!
ROGUE!

LOOK WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!
SO NEXT TIME, SUGAR...
...USE YOUR HANDS.
ANYTHING BROKEN?
ONLY THE FURNITURE.
RED SURE PACKS A WALLOP.
HOW FORTUNATE...
...YOU ARE VIRTUALLY INVULNERABLE.
CHYORT VOZMEE!
RACHEL'S THROWING A TANTRUM!
HER TELEKINETIC POWER'S FLARING OUT OF CONTROL!
DOWN, LINDSAY! STAY BEHIND ME!
HEY-- OUCH!
RACHEL-- STOP!
CUT IT OUT, GIRL! YOU GOT NO CALL TO WRECK Ms. McCABE'S KITCHEN!
SHUT UP! LEAVE ME ALONE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! NONE OF YOU UNDERSTAND!
AN' YOU CAN'T KEEP RUNNIN' AN' HIDIN'.
YOU'RE LIVIN' A LIE, RAY, AN' IT'S TEARIN' YOU APART.
YOU HAVE TO TELL SCOTT WHO YOU ARE AN' WHERE YOU COME FROM.
I-- I CAN'T!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR GHOSTS.
THAT'S WHAT AH DID, THE NIGHT WE FACED THE BEYONDER.* AH CAME TO TERMS WITH WHAT AH'D DONE TO CAROL DANVERS, AH ACCEPTED THERE'S A PART OF HER THAT'LL ALWAYS BE PART OF ME.
AH FINALLY PUT MAH DEMONS TO REST, HON. IT'S HARD, BUT IF YOU'RE EVER GOING TO LIVE WITH YOURSELF, YOU GOT TO DO THE SAME.
*X-MEN #203.

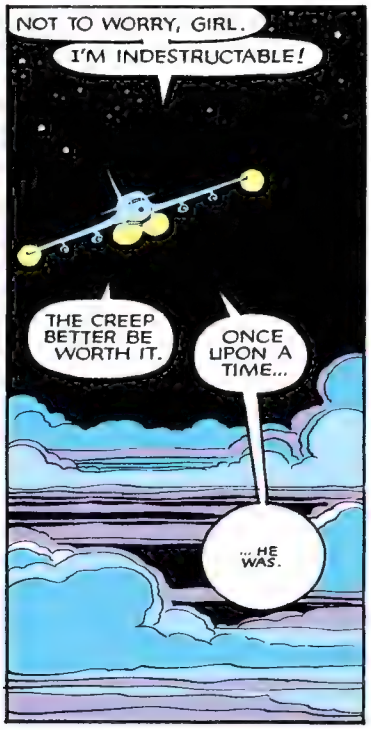

TWA FLIGHT 707--
--THREE HOURS OUTBOUND FROM LONDON, EN ROUTE OVER THE NORTH POLE TO LOS ANGELES.
WITH DINNER SERVED AND THE MOVIE RUNNING, SENIOR ATTENDANT AMANDA SEFTON AT LAST HAS A FEW PRECIOUS MINUTES TO HERSELF.

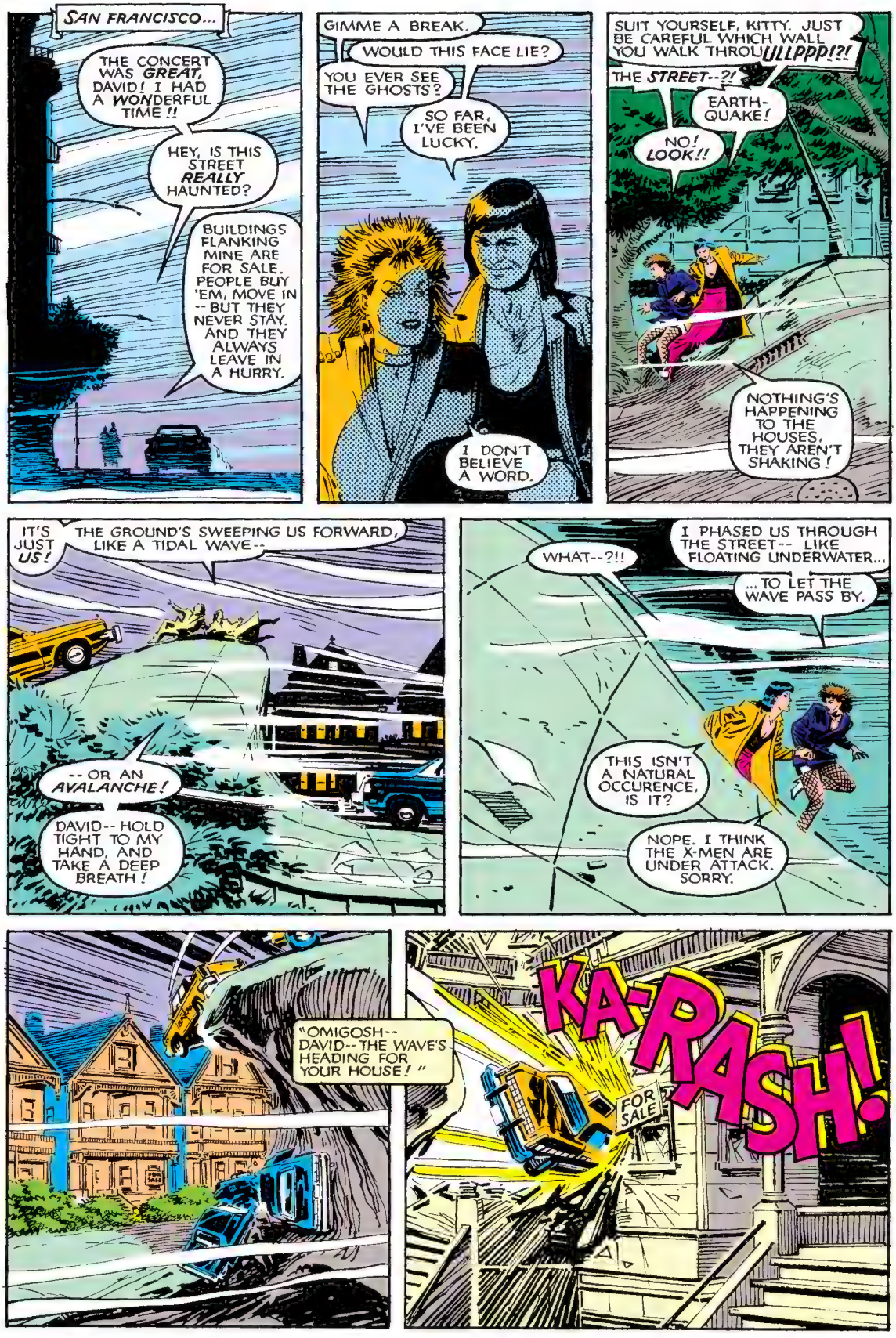

NO WORD FROM KURT.
I PHONED FROM HEATHROW-- BUT ALL I GOT WAS HIS ANSWERING MACHINE.
I'VE BEEN CALLING ALL WEEK.
IS HE IGNORING ME-- ARE WE FINISHED--

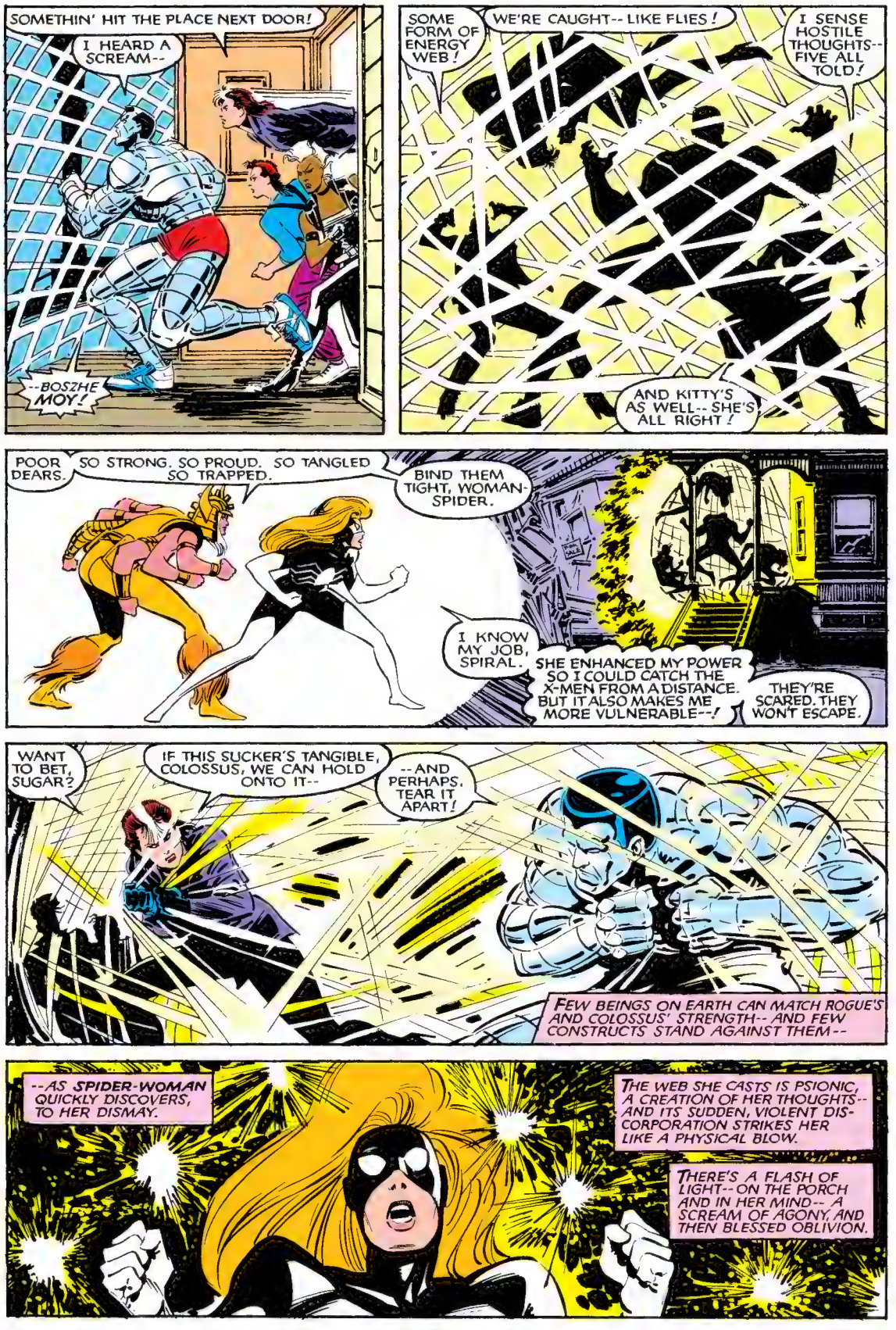

--OR HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?!
THERE'S SO MUCH TEARING AT HIM-- IT'S MADE HIM SHUT ME COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS LIFE.
HE WONDERS WHO HE TRULY IS AND WHERE HE COMES FROM--
--AND RESENTS ME BECAUSE HE THINKS I KNOW MORE THAN I DO AND WON'T TELL.

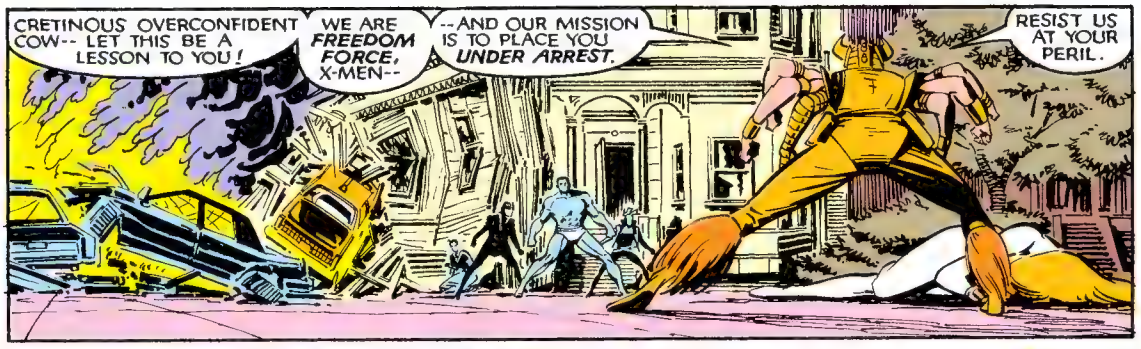
HE'S LOST FAITH IN EVERYTHING-- IN HIS GOD, HIMSELF AS A MAN AND AS AN X-MAN. I TRIED TO HELP, BUT HE DROVE ME AWAY.
HE EVEN ACCUSED ME OF USING MY MAGICKAL POWERS TO MAKE HIM LOVE ME.
I NEVER REALIZED 'TIL THEN HOW SIMPLE WORDS COULD HURT...

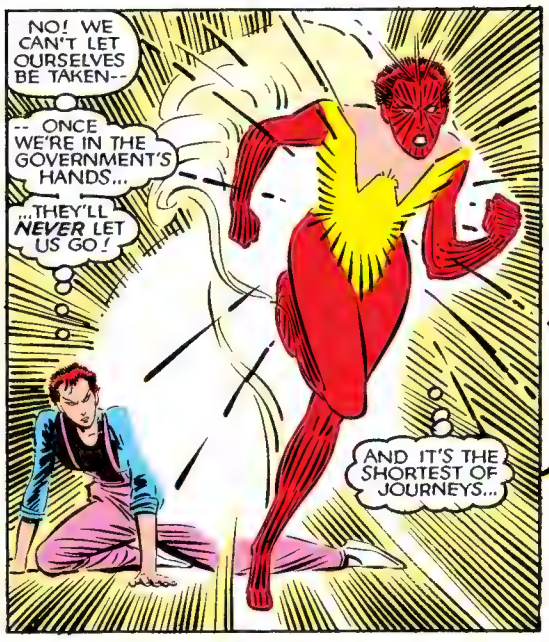
AMANDA, YOU OKAY?
SWEETHEART, YOU'RE CRYING!
ONIONS. IN THE ENTRÉE.
Uh-huh.
HEY, CONNIE, I'VE BEEN WORSE.
AND I'LL GET BETTER.


NOT TO WORRY, GIRL.
I'M INDESTRUCTABLE!
THE CREEP BETTER BE WORTH IT.
ONCE UPON A TIME...
...HE WAS.

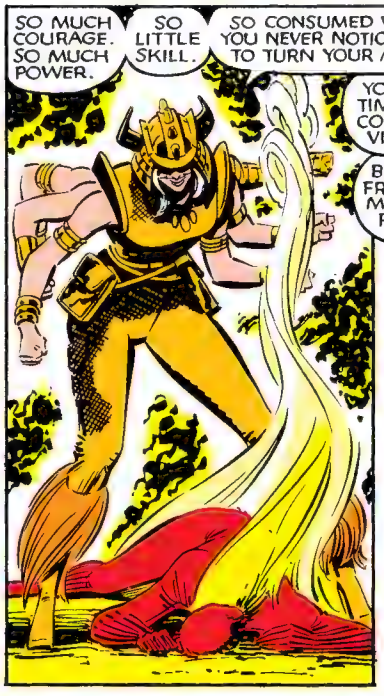

SAN FRANCISCO...
THE CONCERT WAS GREAT, DAVID! I HAD A WONDERFUL TIME!!
HEY, IS THIS STREET REALLY HAUNTED?
BUILDINGS FLANKING MINE ARE FOR SALE. PEOPLE BUY 'EM, MOVE IN -- BUT THEY NEVER STAY. AND THEY ALWAYS LEAVE IN A HURRY.
GIMME A BREAK.
WOULD THIS FACE LIE?
YOU EVER SEE THE GHOSTS?
SO FAR, I'VE BEEN LUCKY.
I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD.
SUIT YOURSELF, KITTY. JUST BE CAREFUL WHICH WALL YOU WALK THROU LLLPPP!?!
THE STREET--?!
EARTH-QUAKE!
NO! LOOK!!
NOTHING'S HAPPENING TO THE HOUSES, THEY AREN'T SHAKING!
IT'S JUST US!
THE GROUND'S SWEEPING US FORWARD, LIKE A TIDAL WAVE--
-- OR AN AVALANCHE!
DAVID-- HOLD TIGHT TO MY HAND, AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH!
WHAT--?!!
I PHASED US THROUGH THE STREET-- LIKE FLOATING UNDERWATER...
...TO LET THE WAVE PASS BY.
THIS ISN'T A NATURAL OCCURENCE, IS IT?
NOPE. I THINK THE X-MEN ARE UNDER ATTACK. SORRY.
"OMIGOSH-- DAVID-- THE WAVE'S HEADING FOR YOUR HOUSE!"
KA-RASH!
FOR SALE

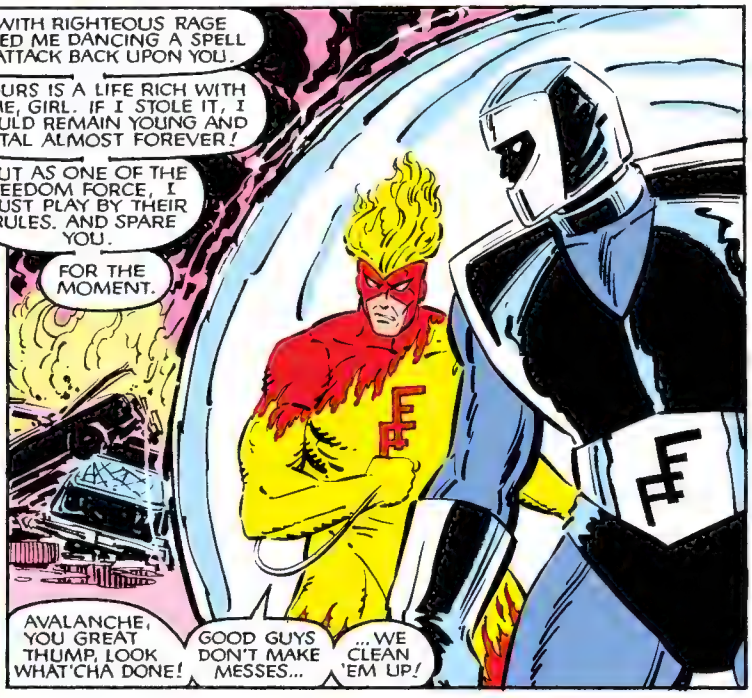

SOMETHIN' HIT THE PLACE NEXT DOOR!
I HEARD A SCREAM--
--BOSZHE MOY!
SOME FORM OF ENERGY WEB!
WE'RE CAUGHT-- LIKE FLIES!
I SENSE HOSTILE THOUGHTS-- FIVE ALL TOLD!
AND KITTY'S AS WELL-- SHE'S ALL RIGHT!
POOR DEARS.
SO STRONG. SO PROUD. SO TANGLED SO TRAPPED.
BIND THEM TIGHT, WOMAN-SPIDER.
I KNOW MY JOB, SPIRAL.
SHE ENHANCED MY POWER SO I COULD CATCH THE X-MEN FROM A DISTANCE. BUT IT ALSO MAKES ME MORE VULNERABLE--!
THEY'RE SCARED. THEY WON'T ESCAPE.
WANT TO BET, SUGAR?
IF THIS SUCKER'S TANGIBLE, COLOSSUS, WE CAN HOLD ONTO IT--
--AND PERHAPS, TEAR IT APART!
FEW BEINGS ON EARTH CAN MATCH ROGUE'S AND COLOSSUS' STRENGTH-- AND FEW CONSTRUCTS STAND AGAINST THEM--
--AS SPIDER-WOMAN QUICKLY DISCOVERS, TO HER DISMAY.
THE WEB SHE CASTS IS PSIONIC, A CREATION OF HER THOUGHTS-- AND ITS SUDDEN, VIOLENT DISCORPORATION STRIKES HER LIKE A PHYSICAL BLOW.
THERE'S A FLASH OF LIGHT-- ON THE PORCH AND IN HER MIND-- A SCREAM OF AGONY, AND THEN BLESSED OBLIVION.

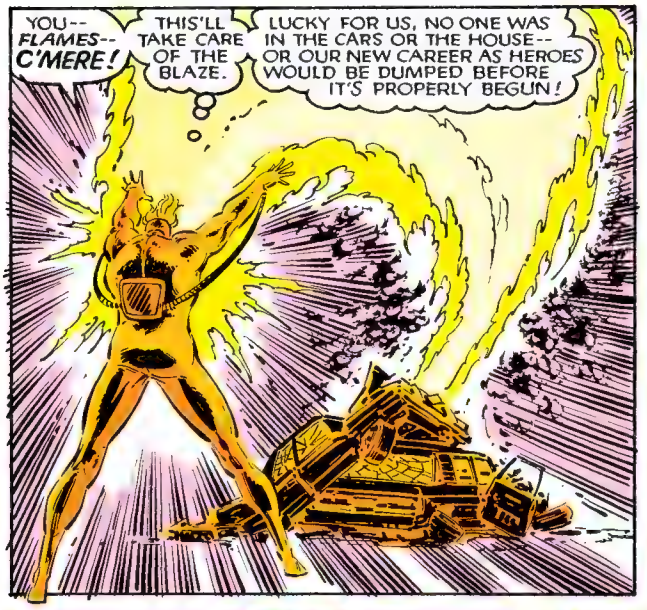

CRETINOUS OVERCONFIDENT COW-- LET THIS BE A LESSON TO YOU!
WE ARE FREEDOM FORCE, X-MEN--
--AND OUR MISSION IS TO PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST.
RESIST US AT YOUR PERIL.

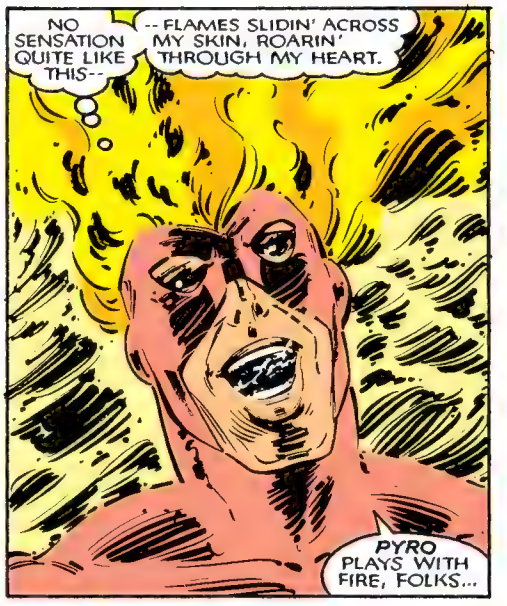

NO! WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE TAKEN--
-- ONCE WE'RE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDS...
...THEY'LL NEVER LET US GO!
AND IT'S THE SHORTEST OF JOURNEYS...

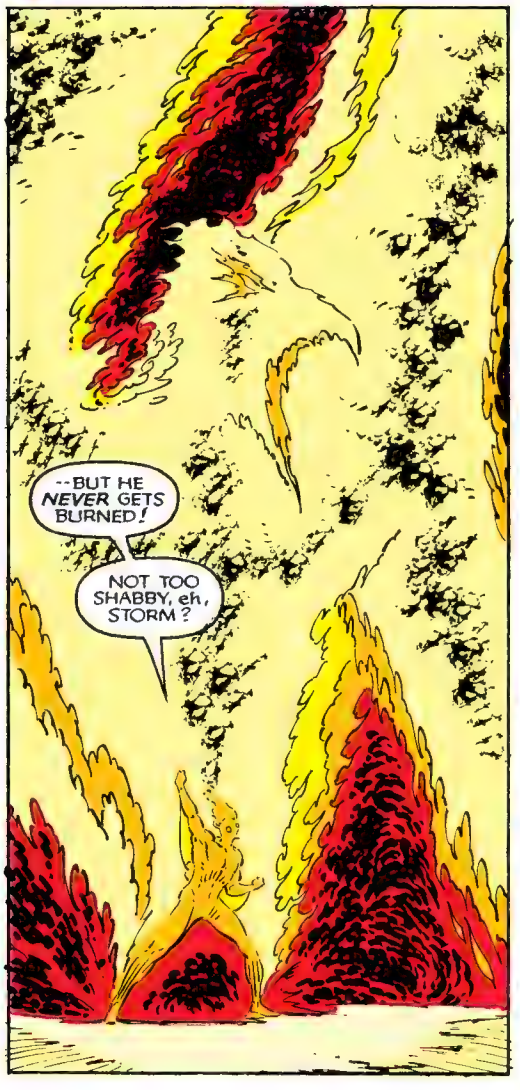
...FROM PRISON TO A DEATH CAMP--
UNNGNPH!
ZWOWK!

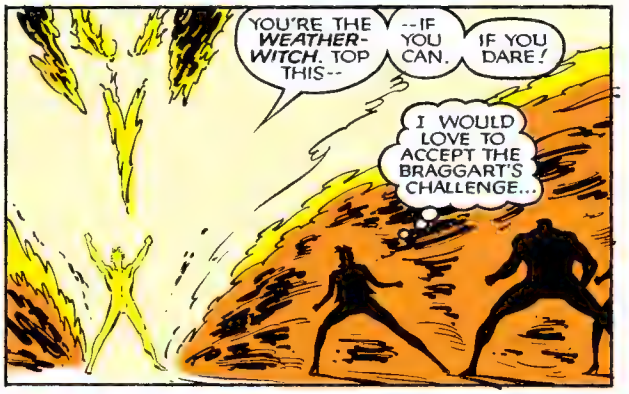

SO MUCH COURAGE. SO MUCH POWER.
SO LITTLE SKILL.
SO CONSUMED WITH RIGHTEOUS RAGE YOU NEVER NOTICED ME DANCING A SPELL TO TURN YOUR ATTACK BACK UPON YOU.

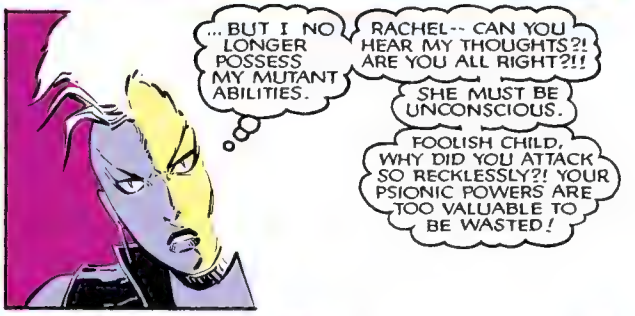

YOURS IS A LIFE RICH WITH TIME, GIRL. IF I STOLE IT, I COULD REMAIN YOUNG AND VITAL ALMOST FOREVER!
BUT AS ONE OF THE FREEDOM FORCE, I MUST PLAY BY THEIR RULES. AND SPARE YOU.
FOR THE MOMENT.
AVALANCHE, YOU GREAT THUMP, LOOK WHAT'CHA DONE!
GOOD GUYS DON'T MAKE MESSES...
...WE CLEAN 'EM UP!

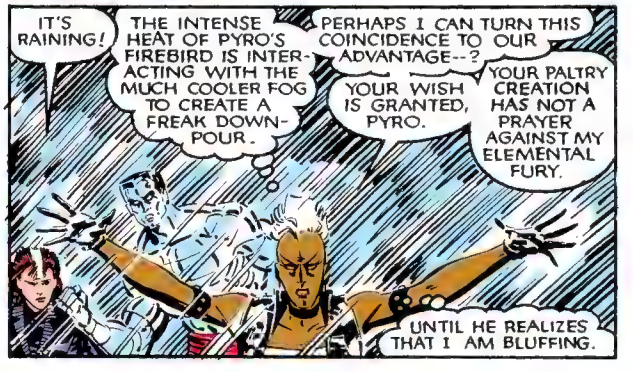

YOU-- FLAMES-- C'MERE!
THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF THE BLAZE.
LUCKY FOR US, NO ONE WAS IN THE CARS OR THE HOUSE-- OR OUR NEW CAREER AS HEROES WOULD BE DUMPED BEFORE IT'S PROPERLY BEGUN!

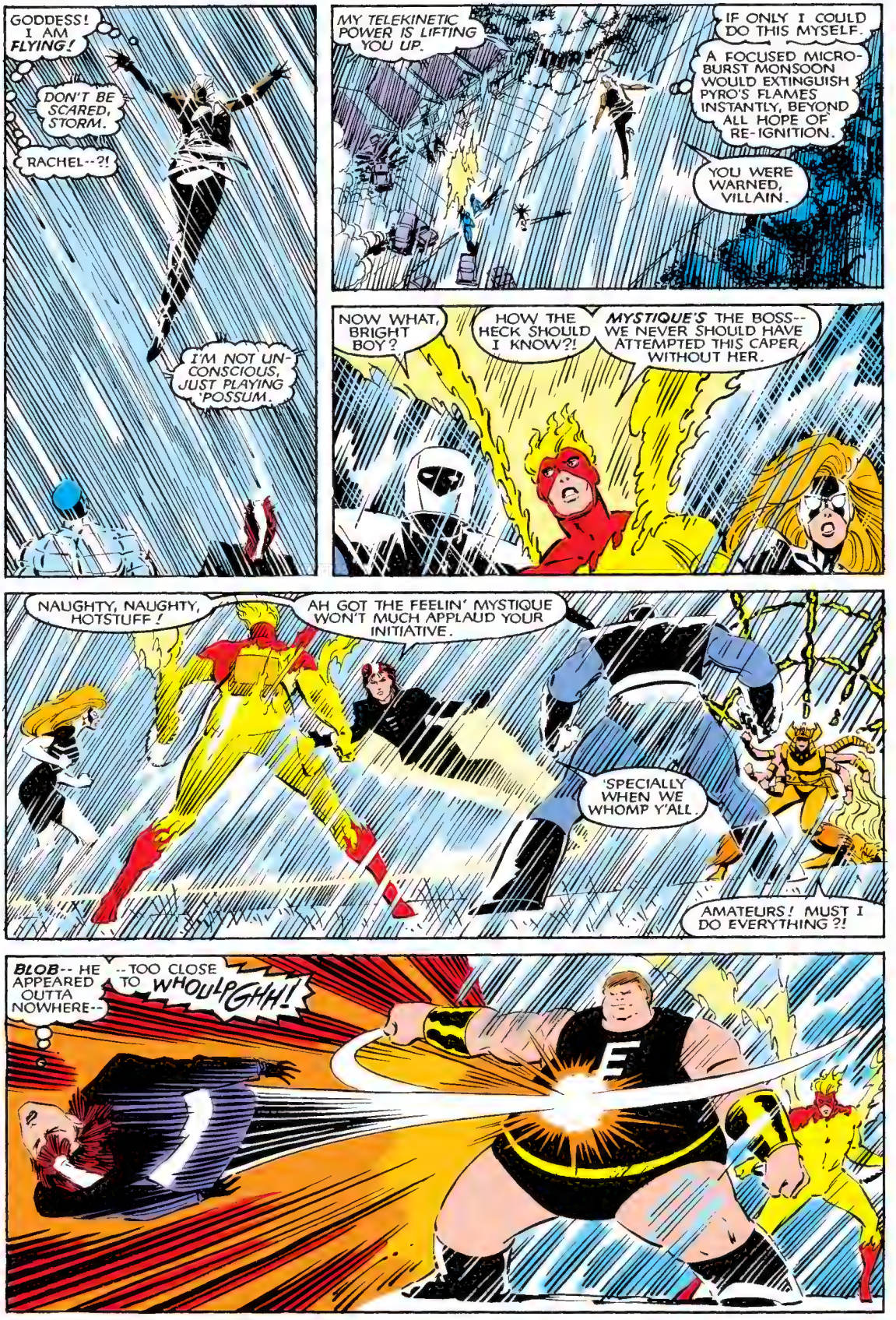

NO SENSATION QUITE LIKE THIS--
-- FLAMES SLIDIN' ACROSS MY SKIN, ROARIN' THROUGH MY HEART.
PYRO PLAYS WITH FIRE, FOLKS...

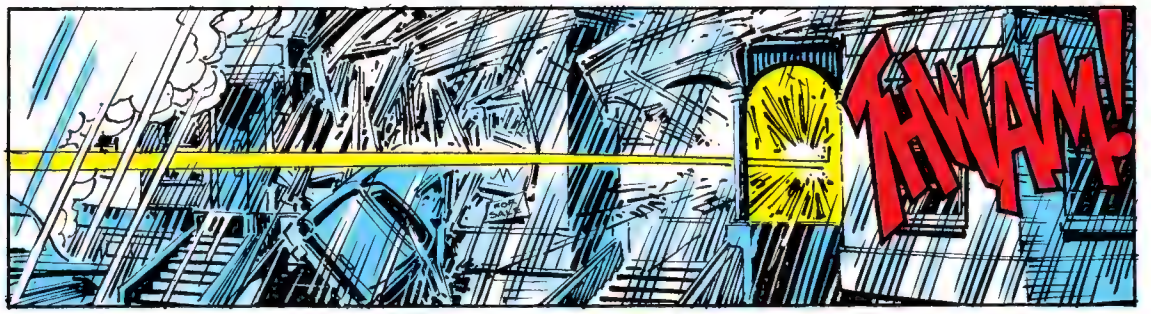

--BUT HE NEVER GETS BURNED!
NOT TOO SHABBY, eh, STORM?

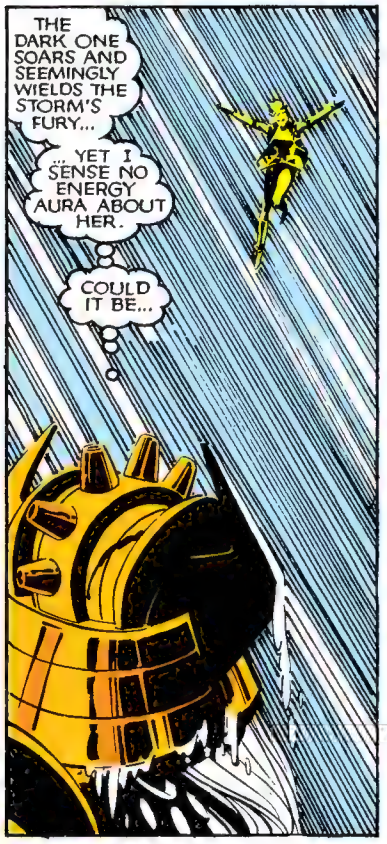

YOU'RE THE WEATHER-WITCH. TOP THIS--
--IF YOU CAN.
IF YOU DARE!
I WOULD LOVE TO ACCEPT THE BRAGGART'S CHALLENGE...


... BUT I NO LONGER POSSESS MY MUTANT ABILITIES.
RACHEL-- CAN YOU HEAR MY THOUGHTS?! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!!
SHE MUST BE UNCONSCIOUS.
FOOLISH CHILD, WHY DID YOU ATTACK SO RECKLESSLY?! YOUR PSIONIC POWERS ARE TOO VALUABLE TO BE WASTED!

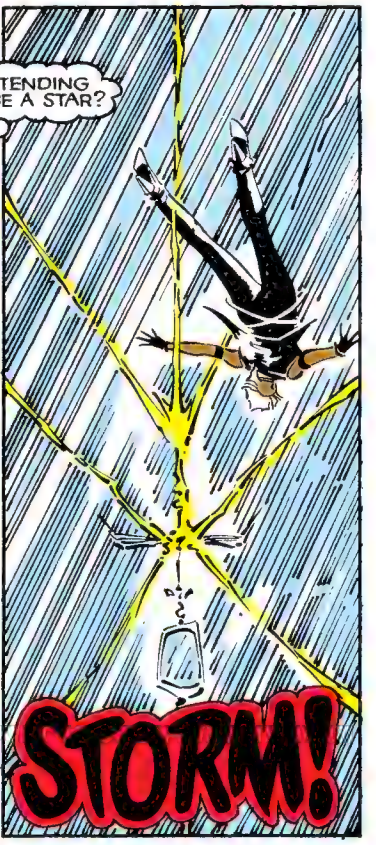

IT'S RAINING!
THE INTENSE HEAT OF PYRO'S FIREBIRD IS INTERACTING WITH THE MUCH COOLER FOG TO CREATE A FREAK DOWNPOUR.
PERHAPS I CAN TURN THIS COINCIDENCE TO OUR ADVANTAGE--?
YOUR WISH IS GRANTED, PYRO.
YOUR PALTRY CREATION HAS NOT A PRAYER AGAINST MY ELEMENTAL FURY.
UNTIL HE REALIZES THAT I AM BLUFFING.

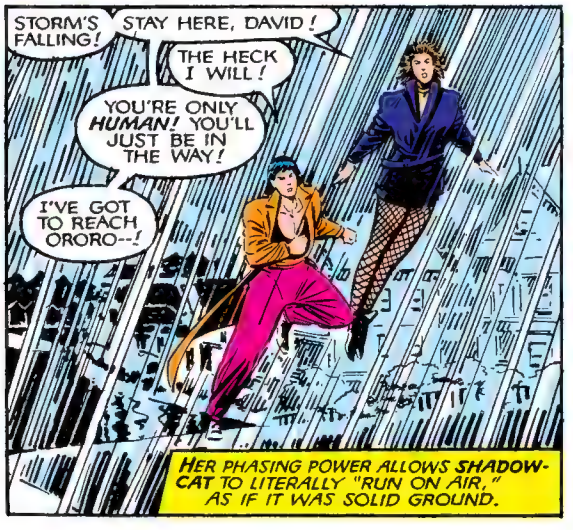

GODDESS! I AM FLYING!
DON'T BE SCARED, STORM.
RACHEL--?!
I'M NOT UNCONSCIOUS, JUST PLAYING 'POSSUM.
MY TELEKINETIC POWER IS LIFTING YOU UP.
IF ONLY I COULD DO THIS MYSELF.
A FOCUSED MICRO-BURST MONSOON WOULD EXTINGUISH PYRO'S FLAMES INSTANTLY, BEYOND ALL HOPE OF RE-IGNITION.
YOU WERE WARNED, VILLAIN.
NOW WHAT, BRIGHT BOY?
HOW THE HECK SHOULD I KNOW?!
MYSTIQUE'S THE BOSS--WE NEVER SHOULD HAVE ATTEMPTED THIS CAPER WITHOUT HER.
NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY, HOTSTUFF!
AH GOT THE FEELIN' MYSTIQUE WON'T MUCH APPLAUD YOUR INITIATIVE.
'SPECIALLY WHEN WE WHOMP Y'ALL.
AMATEURS! MUST I DO EVERYTHING?!
BLOB-- HE APPEARED OUTTA NOWHERE--
--TOO CLOSE TO WHOULPGHH!

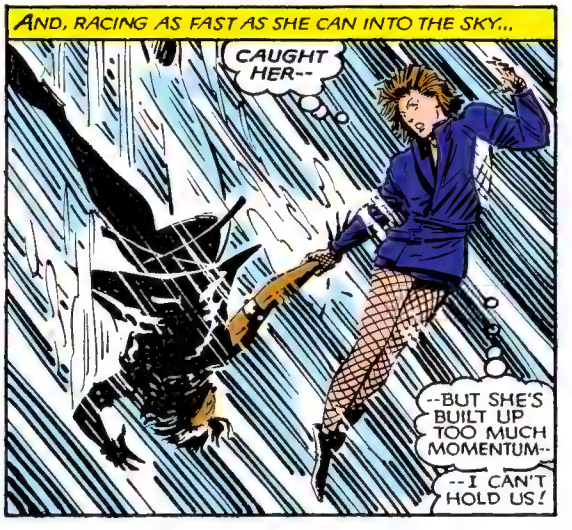

THWAM!

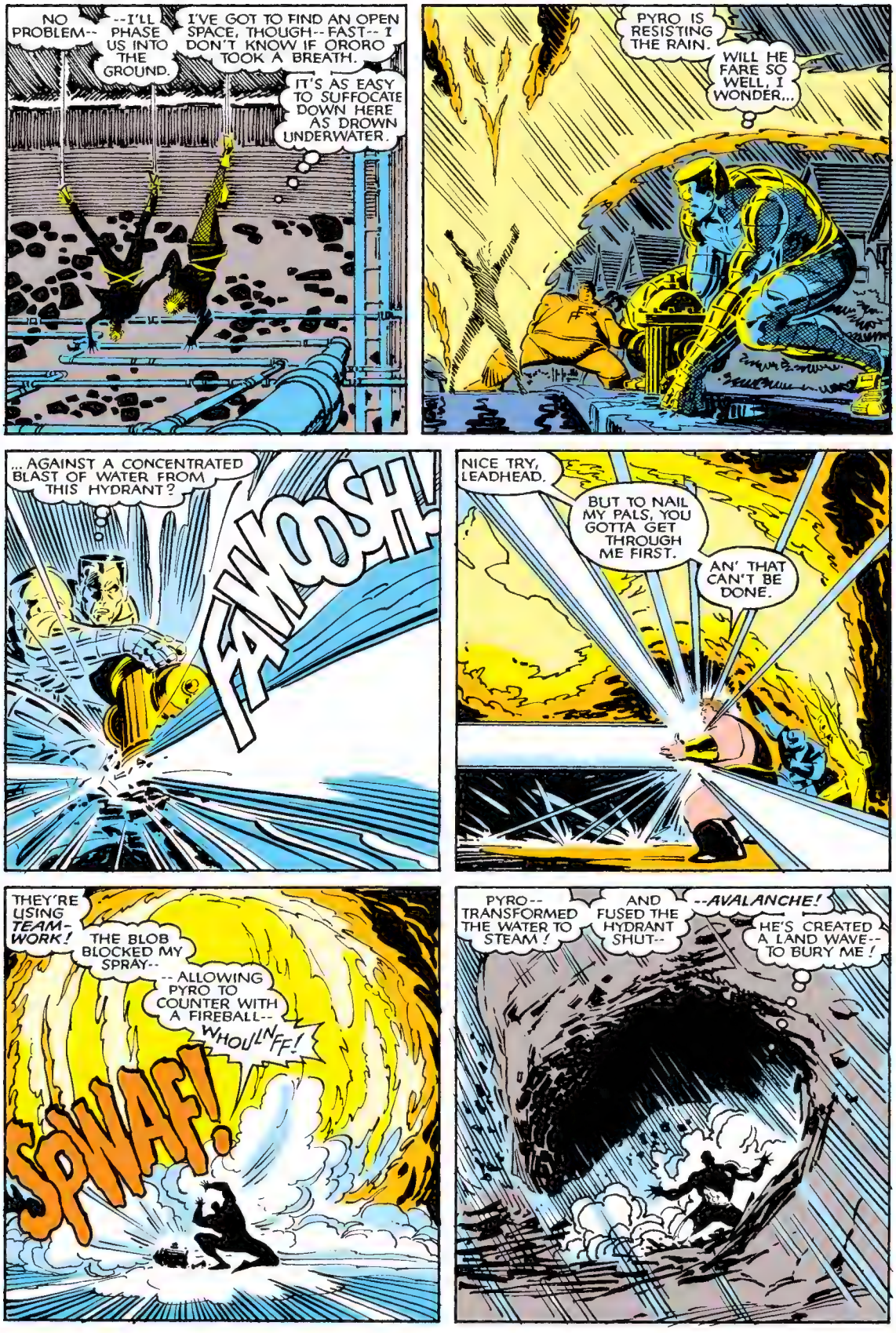

THE DARK ONE SOARS AND SEEMINGLY WIELDS THE STORM'S FURY...
... YET I SENSE NO ENERGY AURA ABOUT HER.
COULD IT BE...

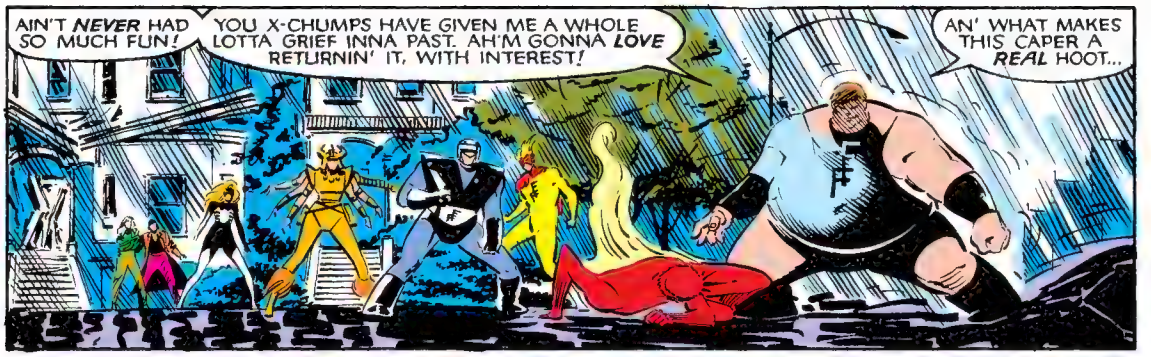
... SHE'S MERELY PLAYING A PART?

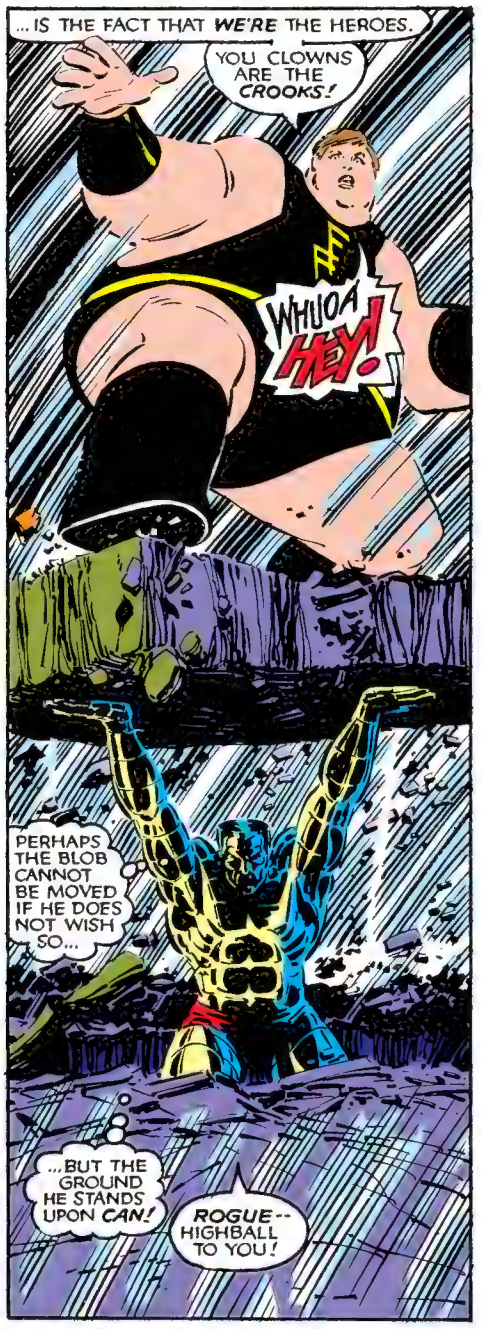

PRETENDING TO BE A STAR?
STORM!

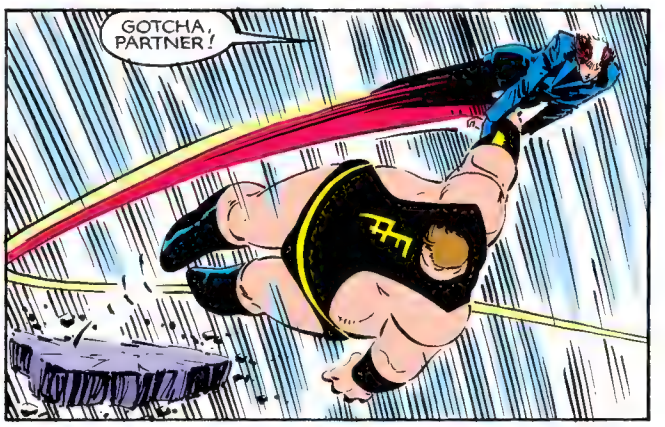

STORM'S FALLING!
STAY HERE, DAVID!
THE HECK I WILL!
YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN! YOU'LL JUST BE IN THE WAY!
I'VE GOT TO REACH ORORO--!
HER PHASING POWER ALLOWS SHADOW-CAT TO LITERALLY "RUN ON AIR," AS IF IT WAS SOLID GROUND.

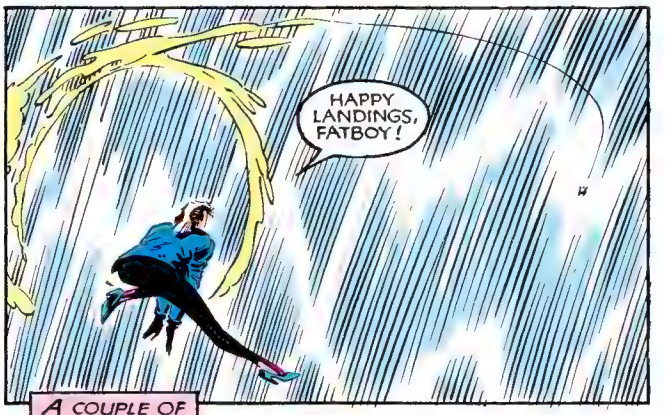

AND, RACING AS FAST AS SHE CAN INTO THE SKY...
CAUGHT HER--
--BUT SHE'S BUILT UP TOO MUCH MOMENTUM--
--I CAN'T HOLD US!

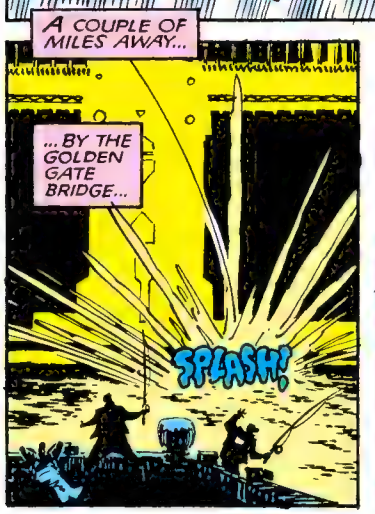

NO PROBLEM--
--I'LL PHASE US INTO THE GROUND.
I'VE GOT TO FIND AN OPEN SPACE, THOUGH-- FAST-- I DON'T KNOW IF ORORO TOOK A BREATH.
IT'S AS EASY TO SUFFOCATE DOWN HERE AS DROWN UNDERWATER.
PYRO IS RESISTING THE RAIN.
WILL HE FARE SO WELL, I WONDER...
... AGAINST A CONCENTRATED BLAST OF WATER FROM THIS HYDRANT?
FAWOOSH!
NICE TRY, LEADHEAD.
BUT TO NAIL MY PALS, YOU GOTTA GET THROUGH ME FIRST.
AN' THAT CAN'T BE DONE.
THEY'RE USING TEAM-WORK!
THE BLOB BLOCKED MY SPRAY--
-- ALLOWING PYRO TO COUNTER WITH A FIREBALL--
WHOULNFF!
SPWAF!
PYRO-- TRANSFORMED THE WATER TO STEAM!
AND FUSED THE HYDRANT SHUT--
--AVALANCHE!
HE'S CREATED A LAND WAVE-- TO BURY ME!


AIN'T NEVER HAD SO MUCH FUN!
YOU X-CHUMPS HAVE GIVEN ME A WHOLE LOTTA GRIEF INNA PAST. AH'M GONNA LOVE RETURNIN' IT, WITH INTEREST!
AN' WHAT MAKES THIS CAPER A REAL HOOT...

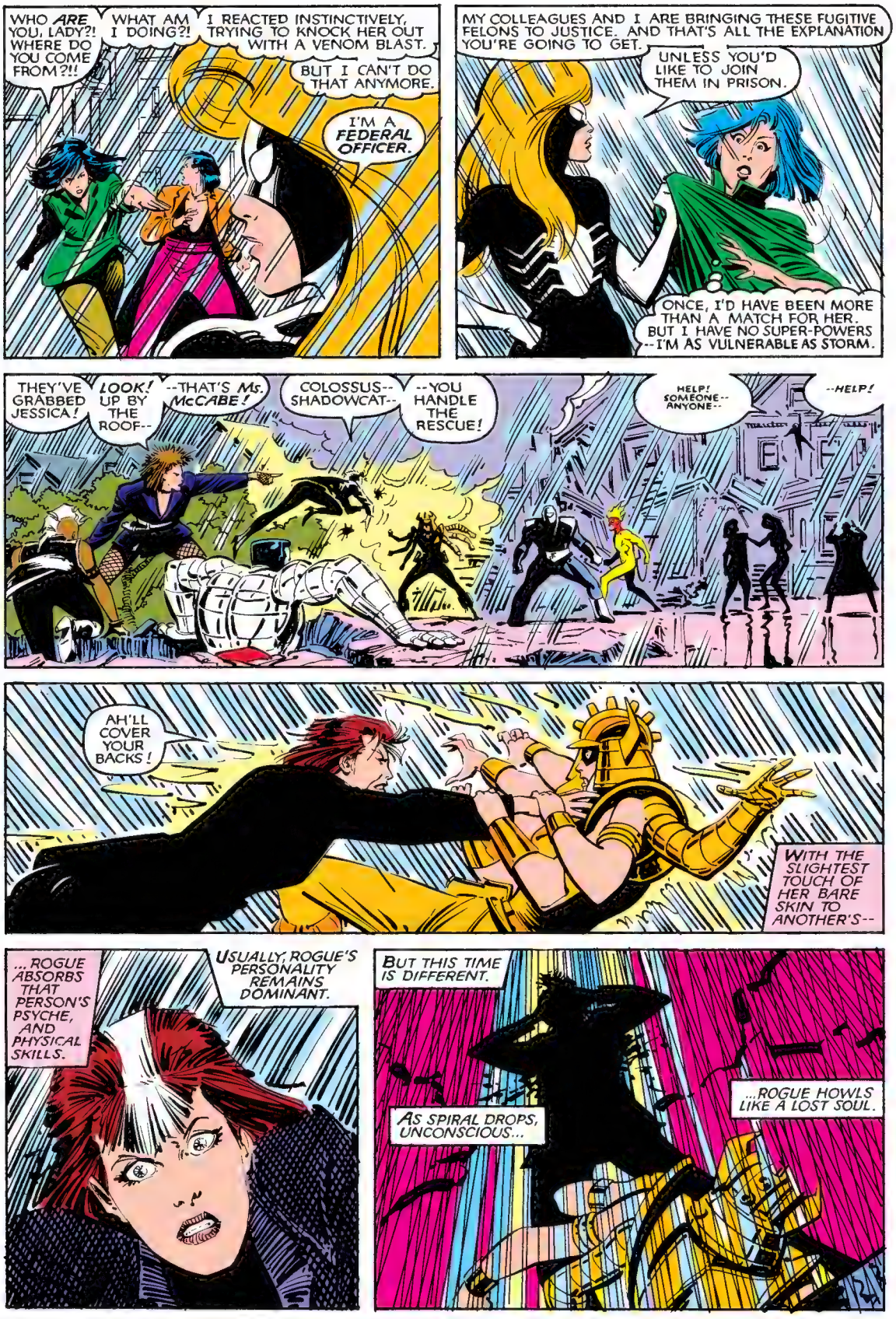

...IS THE FACT THAT WE'RE THE HEROES.
YOU CLOWNS ARE THE CROOKS!
WHUOA HEY!
PERHAPS THE BLOB CANNOT BE MOVED IF HE DOES NOT WISH SO...
...BUT THE GROUND HE STANDS UPON CAN!
ROGUE-- HIGHBALL TO YOU!


GOTCHA, PARTNER!


HAPPY LANDINGS, FATBOY!

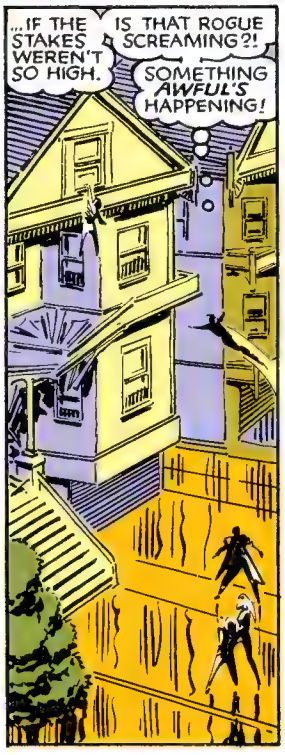

A COUPLE OF MILES AWAY...
...BY THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE...
SPLASH!

THAT WOMAN IN BLACK-- DAVID, SHE CALLED HERSELF SPIDER-WOMAN!
WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS...
...STEALING MY OLD IDENTITY?!

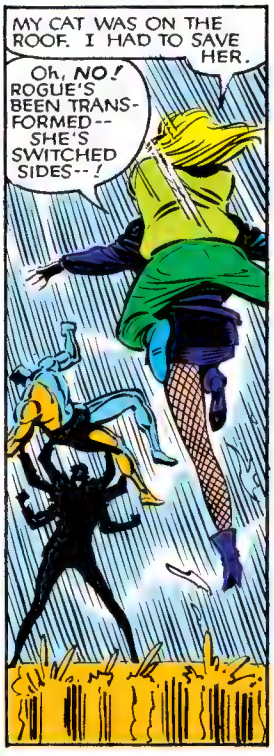

WHO ARE YOU, LADY?! WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?!!
WHAT AM I DOING?!
I REACTED INSTINCTIVELY, TRYING TO KNOCK HER OUT WITH A VENOM BLAST.
BUT I CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE.
I'M A FEDERAL OFFICER.
MY COLLEAGUES AND I ARE BRINGING THESE FUGITIVE FELONS TO JUSTICE. AND THAT'S ALL THE EXPLANATION YOU'RE GOING TO GET.
UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN THEM IN PRISON.
ONCE, I'D HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A MATCH FOR HER. BUT I HAVE NO SUPER-POWERS --I'M AS VULNERABLE AS STORM.
THEY'VE GRABBED JESSICA!
LOOK! UP BY THE ROOF--
--THAT'S Ms. McCABE!
COLOSSUS--SHADOWCAT--
--YOU HANDLE THE RESCUE!
HELP! SOMEONE--ANYONE--
--HELP!
AH'LL COVER YOUR BACKS!
WITH THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH OF HER BARE SKIN TO ANOTHER'S--
...ROGUE ABSORBS THAT PERSON'S PSYCHE, AND PHYSICAL SKILLS.
USUALLY, ROGUE'S PERSONALITY REMAINS DOMINANT.
BUT THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT.
AS SPIRAL DROPS, UNCONSCIOUS...
...ROGUE HOWLS LIKE A LOST SOUL.

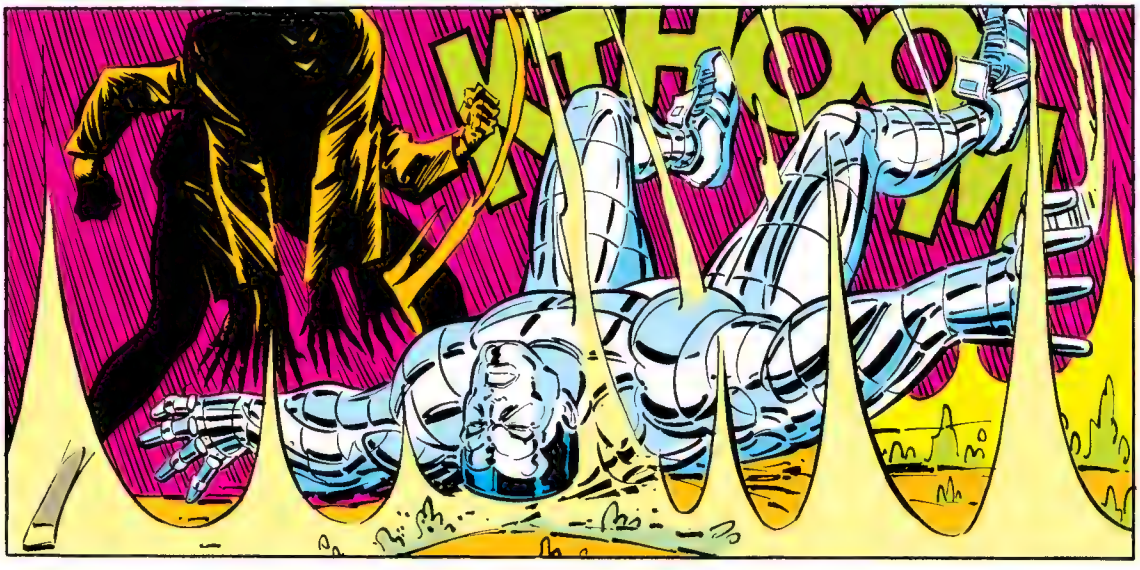
SILLY GIRL.
...BUT FAR FROM HELPLESS!
SPIRAL WAS BORN DANCING THROUGH MINDS, AS THROUGH LIFE!
STOLEN FROM MY HATEFUL, RIGHTFUL FORM I MAY BE...

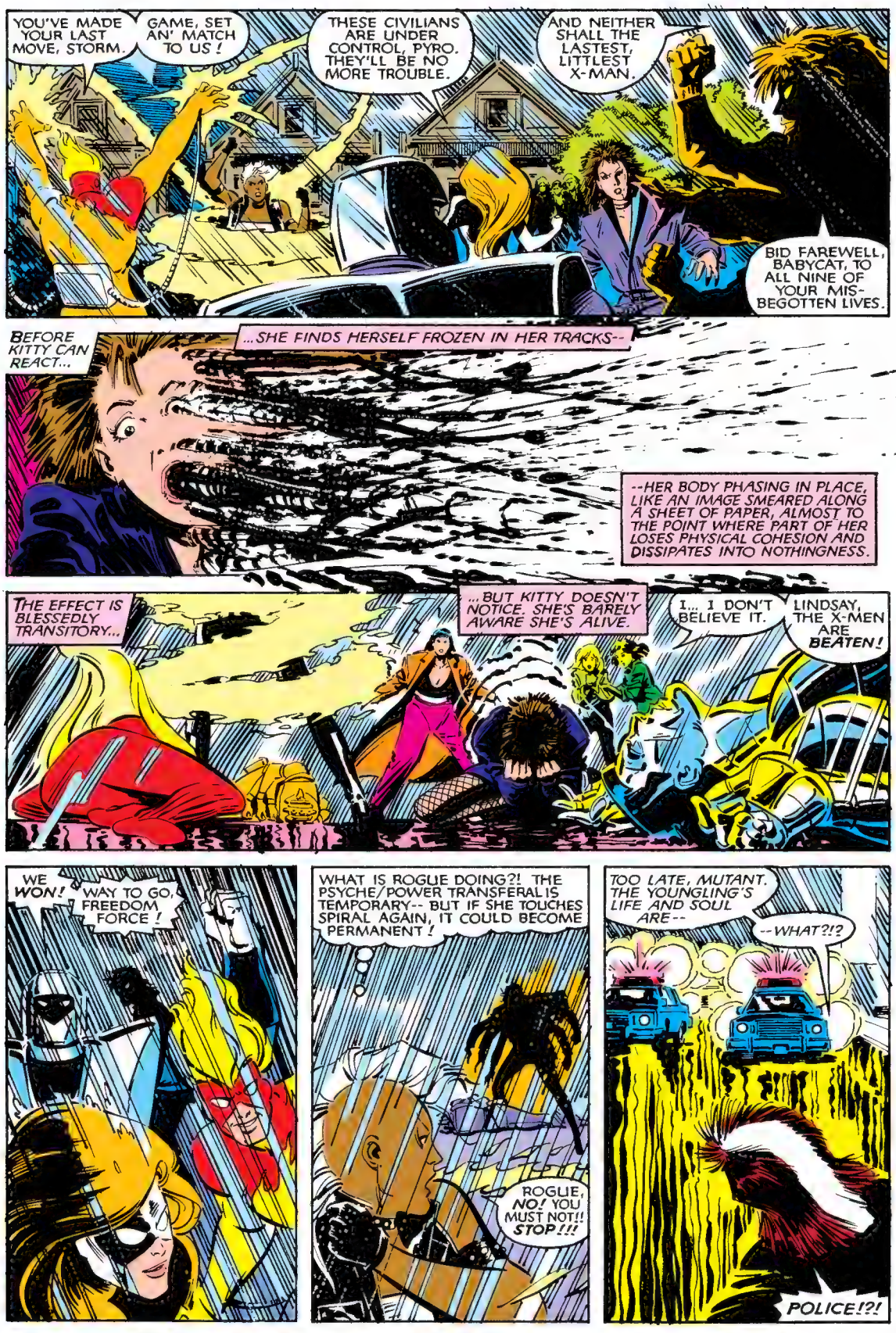
MEANWHILE, SIMULTANEOUSLY...
THIS WOULD BE FUN...


...IF THE STAKES WEREN'T SO HIGH.
IS THAT ROGUE SCREAMING?!
SOMETHING AWFUL'S HAPPENING!

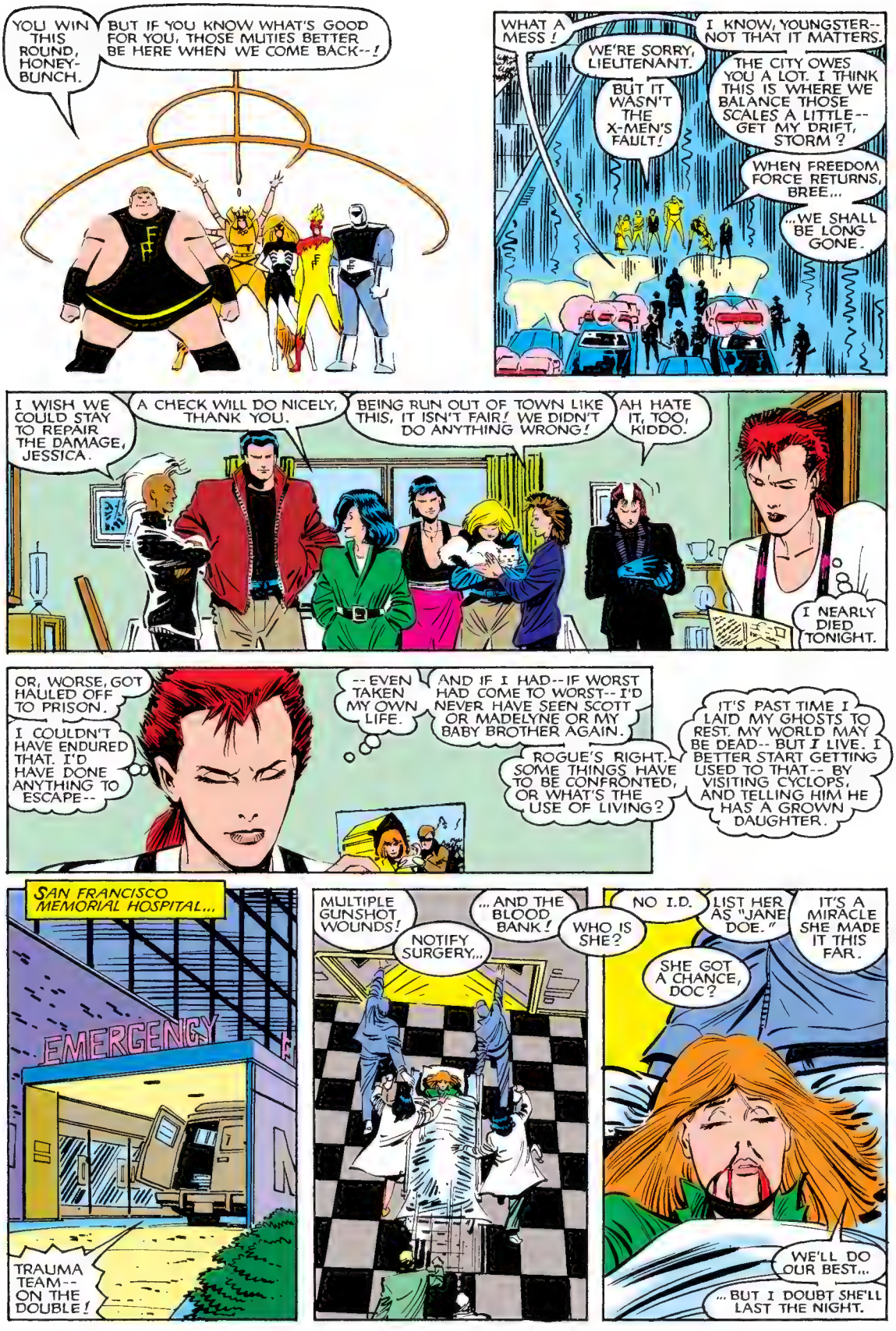
LINDSAY, LET GO! DROP ONTO ME!
I'LL "AIR-WALK" US BOTH...
...TO THE STREET.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING UP THERE, ANYWAY?!

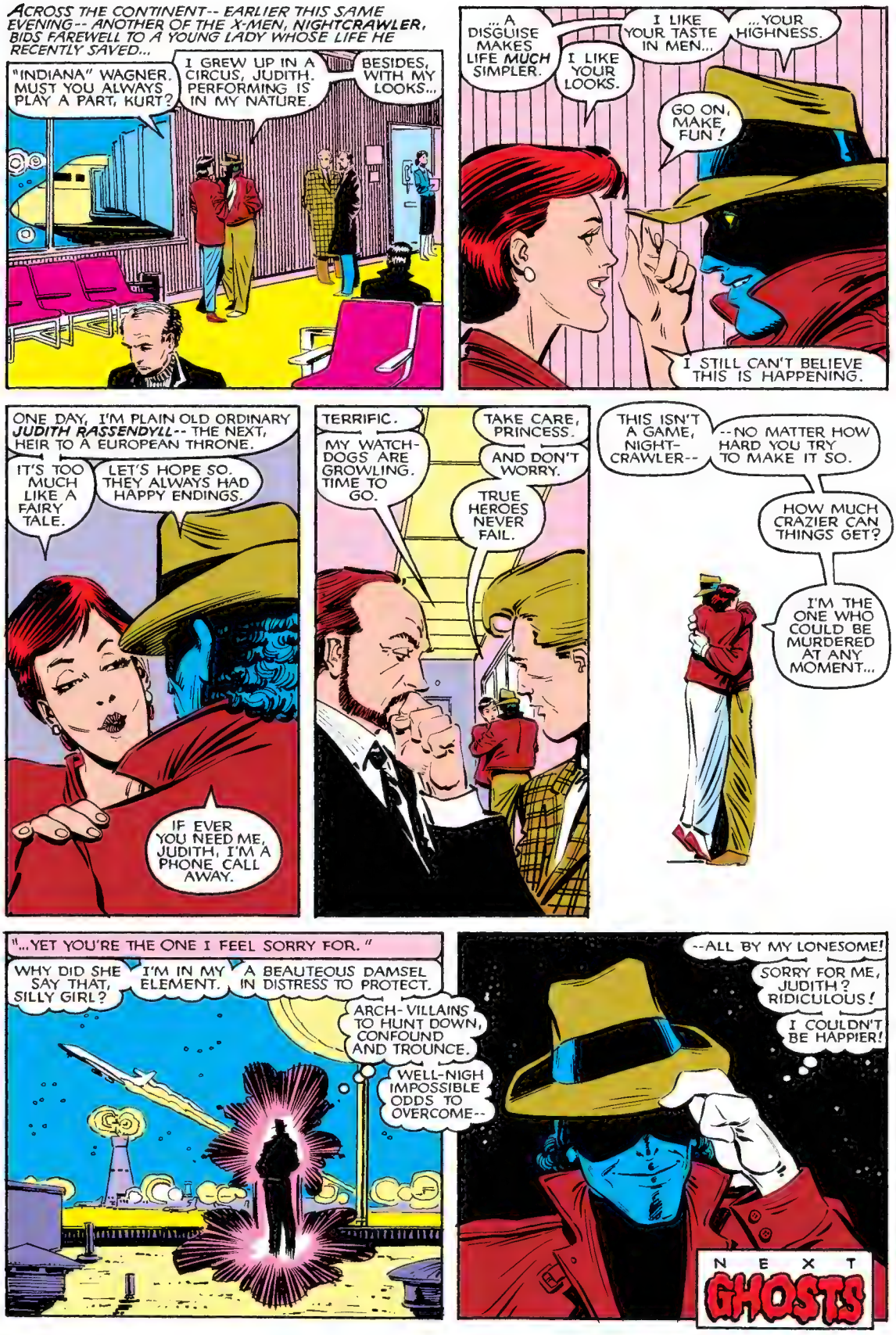

MY CAT WAS ON THE ROOF. I HAD TO SAVE HER.
Oh, NO! ROGUE'S BEEN TRANS-FORMED-- SHE'S SWITCHED SIDES--!


WHOOM


YOU'VE MADE YOUR LAST MOVE, STORM.
GAME, SET AN' MATCH TO US!
THESE CIVILIANS ARE UNDER CONTROL, PYRO. THEY'LL BE NO MORE TROUBLE.
AND NEITHER SHALL THE LASTEST, LITTLEST X-MAN.
BID FAREWELL, BABYCAT, TO ALL NINE OF YOUR MIS-BEGOTTEN LIVES.
BEFORE KITTY CAN REACT...
...SHE FINDS HERSELF FROZEN IN HER TRACKS--
--HER BODY PHASING IN PLACE, LIKE AN IMAGE SMEARED ALONG A SHEET OF PAPER, ALMOST TO THE POINT WHERE PART OF HER LOSES PHYSICAL COHESION AND DISSIPATES INTO NOTHINGNESS.
THE EFFECT IS BLESSEDLY TRANSITORY...
...BUT KITTY DOESN'T NOTICE. SHE'S BARELY AWARE SHE'S ALIVE.
I... I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
LINDSAY, THE X-MEN ARE BEATEN!
WE WON! WAY TO GO, FREEDOM FORCE!
WHAT IS ROGUE DOING?! THE PSYCHE/POWER TRANSFERAL IS TEMPORARY-- BUT IF SHE TOUCHES SPIRAL AGAIN, IT COULD BECOME PERMANENT!
ROGUE, NO! YOU MUST NOT!! STOP!!!
TOO LATE, MUTANT. THE YOUNGLING'S LIFE AND SOUL ARE--
--WHAT?!?
POLICE!?!

IS THIS A PRIVATE PARTY...
... OR MAY ANYONE JOIN IN ?
PRIVATE.
TOUGH.
I'M LIEUTENANT MORRELL.
WE'RE THE LAW.
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
WORDS! WITH LITTLE MEANING AND LESS...
...LESS... POWER--
-- GLORY! AH... AH'M MYSELF AGAIN!
WITCH!
AH'LL HAVE YOUR HEART, SPIRAL!
YOU TRIED ONCE, ROGUE.
THIS TIME, YOU MIGHT NOT BE SO LUCKY.
LET IT RIDE, ROGUE! FOR ALL OUR SAKES, HOLD YOUR TEMPER!
OKAY, JESS. AH GET THE MESSAGE.
YO, SPIRAL -- LATER!
THAT'S A PROMISE.
ONE I'LL GLADLY HOLD YOU TO-- SUGAR.
LIEUTENANT-- FREEDOM FORCE'S ASSIGNMENT IS TO TAKE THESE MUTANTS INTO CUSTODY.
NEVER HEARD OF YOU. OR YOUR "ASSIGN-MENT."
I ASSUME YOU HAVE A WARRANT.
WE'RE FEDS. WE DON'T NEED ONE.
GUESS AGAIN, TUBBO.
THE X-MEN HAVE COMMITTED NO CRIMES IN SAN FRANCISCO--QUITE THE CONTRARY, THEY'RE CIVIC HEROES. ON THE OTHER HAND, BLOB, YOU, PYRO AND AVALANCHE ARE POSTED FELONS.
WE BEEN PARDONED.
CHECK WITH THE WHITE HOUSE, THEY'LL SET YOU STRAIGHT.
FINE. YOU PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION AND WE'LL PROCEED FROM THERE.
NO OTHER WAY.


YOU WIN THIS ROUND, HONEY-BUNCH.
BUT IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, THOSE MUTIES BETTER BE HERE WHEN WE COME BACK--!
WHAT A MESS!
WE'RE SORRY, LIEUTENANT.
BUT IT WASN'T THE X-MEN'S FAULT!
I KNOW, YOUNGSTER-- NOT THAT IT MATTERS.
THE CITY OWES YOU A LOT. I THINK THIS IS WHERE WE BALANCE THOSE SCALES A LITTLE-- GET MY DRIFT, STORM?
WHEN FREEDOM FORCE RETURNS, BREE...
...WE SHALL BE LONG GONE.
I WISH WE COULD STAY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE, JESSICA.
A CHECK WILL DO NICELY, THANK YOU.
BEING RUN OUT OF TOWN LIKE THIS, IT ISN'T FAIR! WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
AH HATE IT, TOO, KIDDO.
I NEARLY DIED TONIGHT.
OR, WORSE, GOT HAULED OFF TO PRISON.
I COULDN'T HAVE ENDURED THAT. I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO ESCAPE--
--EVEN TAKEN MY OWN LIFE.
AND IF I HAD-- IF WORST HAD COME TO WORST-- I'D NEVER HAVE SEEN SCOTT OR MADELYNE OR MY BABY BROTHER AGAIN.
ROGUE'S RIGHT. SOME THINGS HAVE TO BE CONFRONTED, OR WHAT'S THE USE OF LIVING?
IT'S PAST TIME I LAID MY GHOSTS TO REST. MY WORLD MAY BE DEAD-- BUT I LIVE. I BETTER START GETTING USED TO THAT-- BY VISITING CYCLOPS, AND TELLING HIM HE HAS A GROWN DAUGHTER.
SAN FRANCISCO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL...
EMERGENCY
TRAUMA TEAM-- ON THE DOUBLE!
MULTIPLE GUNSHOT WOUNDS!
...AND THE BLOOD BANK!
NOTIFY SURGERY...
WHO IS SHE?
NO I.D.
LIST HER AS "JANE DOE."
IT'S A MIRACLE SHE MADE IT THIS FAR.
SHE GOT A CHANCE, DOC?
WE'LL DO OUR BEST...
...BUT I DOUBT SHE'LL LAST THE NIGHT.


ACROSS THE CONTINENT-- EARLIER THIS SAME EVENING-- ANOTHER OF THE X-MEN, NIGHTCRAWLER, BIDS FAREWELL TO A YOUNG LADY WHOSE LIFE HE RECENTLY SAVED...
"INDIANA" WAGNER. MUST YOU ALWAYS PLAY A PART, KURT?
I GREW UP IN A CIRCUS, JUDITH. PERFORMING IS IN MY NATURE.
BESIDES, WITH MY LOOKS...
...A DISGUISE MAKES LIFE MUCH SIMPLER.
I LIKE YOUR LOOKS.
I LIKE YOUR TASTE IN MEN...
...YOUR HIGHNESS.
GO ON, MAKE FUN!
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING.
ONE DAY, I'M PLAIN OLD ORDINARY JUDITH RASSENDYLL-- THE NEXT, HEIR TO A EUROPEAN THRONE.
IT'S TOO MUCH LIKE A FAIRY TALE.
LET'S HOPE SO. THEY ALWAYS HAD HAPPY ENDINGS.
IF EVER YOU NEED ME, JUDITH, I'M A PHONE CALL AWAY.
TERRIFIC.
MY WATCH-DOGS ARE GROWLING. TIME TO GO.
TAKE CARE, PRINCESS.
AND DON'T WORRY.
TRUE HEROES NEVER FAIL.
THIS ISN'T A GAME, NIGHT-CRAWLER--
--NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY TO MAKE IT SO.
HOW MUCH CRAZIER CAN THINGS GET?
I'M THE ONE WHO COULD BE MURDERED AT ANY MOMENT...
"...YET YOU'RE THE ONE I FEEL SORRY FOR."
WHY DID SHE SAY THAT, SILLY GIRL?
I'M IN MY ELEMENT.
A BEAUTEOUS DAMSEL IN DISTRESS TO PROTECT.
ARCH-VILLAINS TO HUNT DOWN, CONFOUND AND TROUNCE.
WELL-NIGH IMPOSSIBLE ODDS TO OVERCOME--
--ALL BY MY LONESOME!
SORRY FOR ME, JUDITH? RIDICULOUS!
I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER!
NEXT
GHOSTS

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25TH
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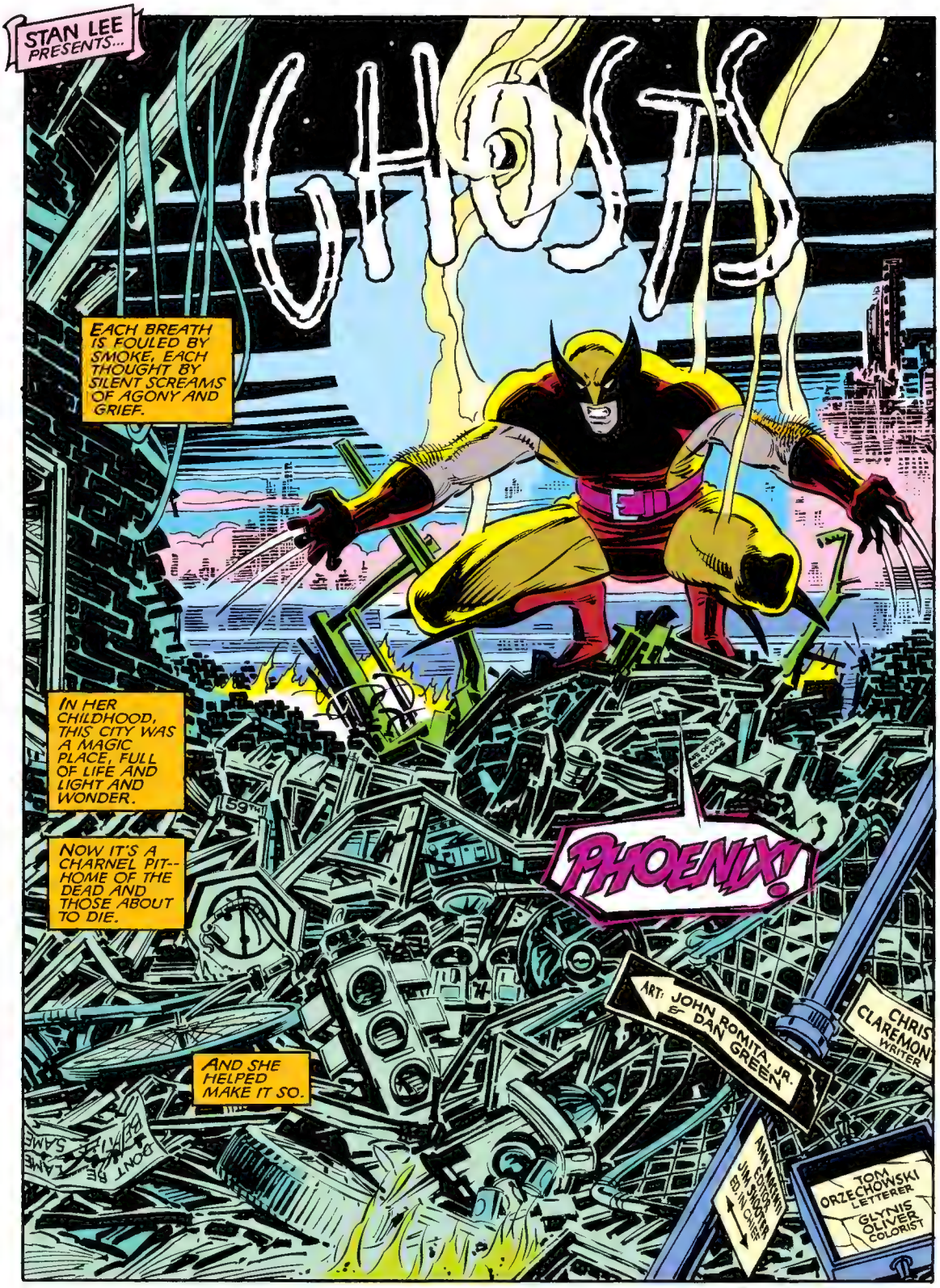
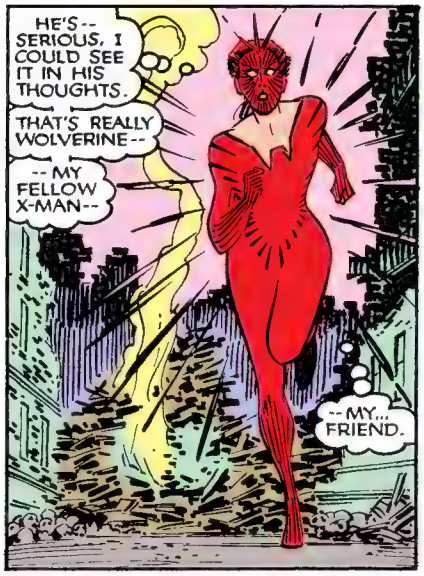
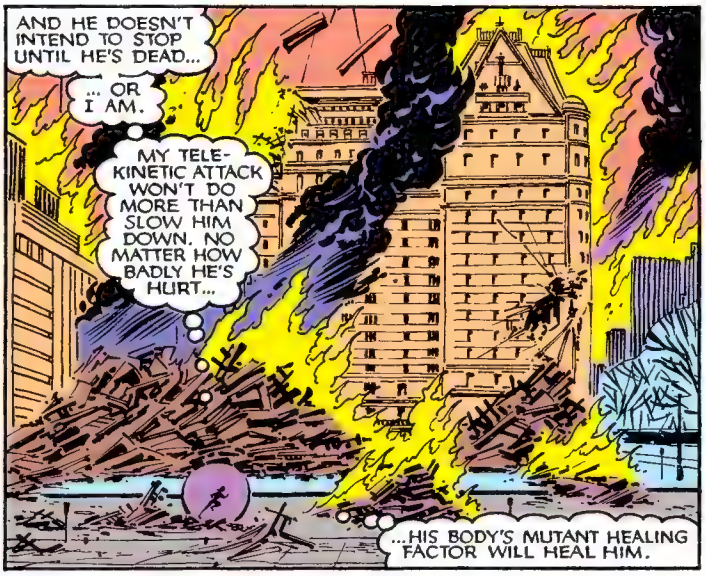
TM
75¢
207
JULY
02461
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN®

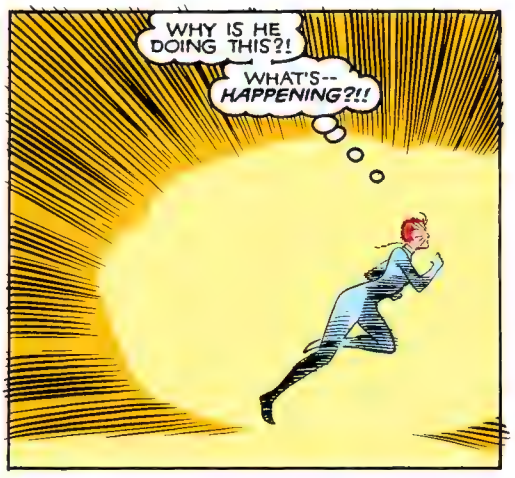

STAN LEE PRESENTS...
GHOST
EACH BREATH IS FOULED BY SMOKE, EACH THOUGHT BY SILENT SCREAMS OF AGONY AND GRIEF.
IN HER CHILDHOOD, THIS CITY WAS A MAGIC PLACE, FULL OF LIFE AND LIGHT AND WONDER.
NOW IT'S A CHARNEL PIT--HOME OF THE DEAD AND THOSE ABOUT TO DIE.
AND SHE HELPED MAKE IT SO.
PHOENIX!
ART: JOHN ROMITA, JR. & DAN GREEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST

WOLVERINE!
BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE A FRIENDLY FACE.
WHAT'S GOING ON, PARTNER?
YOU'RE A BRIGHT GIRL.
!?!
FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF.
OW!
YOU CUT ME!
BABE, I AIM TO KILL YOU.
NEVER!

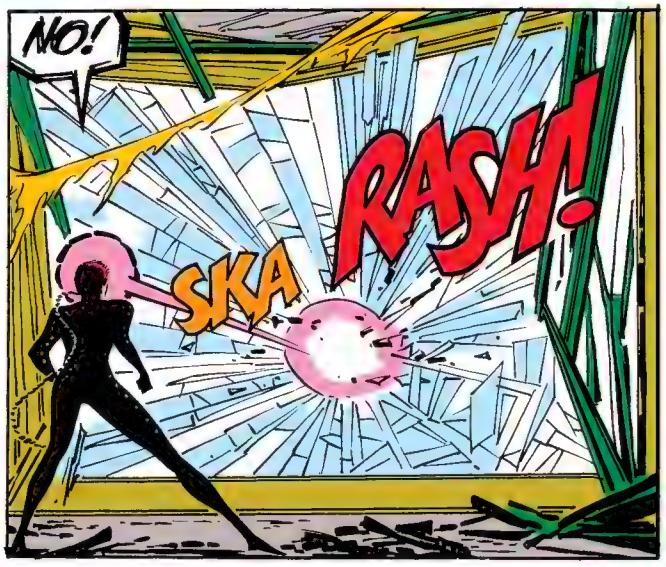

HE'S-- SERIOUS. I COULD SEE IT IN HIS THOUGHTS.
THAT'S REALLY WOLVERINE--
-- MY FELLOW X-MAN--
--MY... FRIEND.

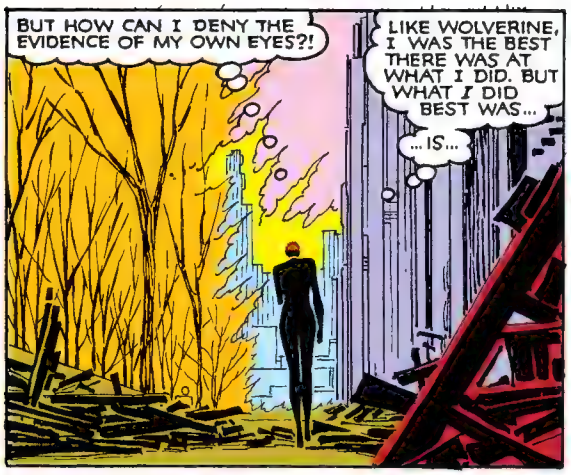

AND HE DOESN'T INTEND TO STOP UNTIL HE'S DEAD...
... OR I AM.
MY TELE-KINETIC ATTACK WON'T DO MORE THAN SLOW HIM DOWN. NO MATTER HOW BADLY HE'S HURT...
...HIS BODY'S MUTANT HEALING FACTOR WILL HEAL HIM.

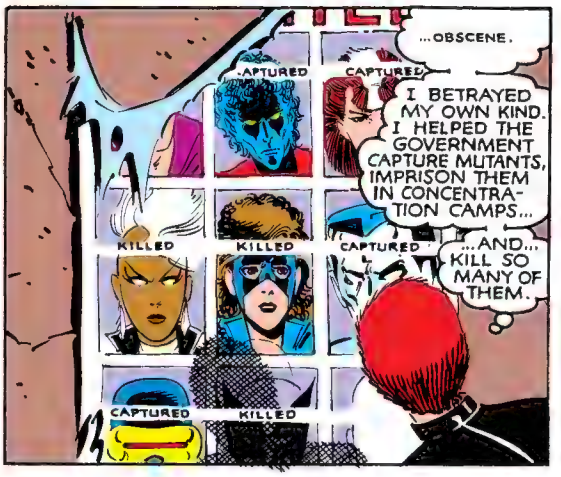
AND HIS ENHANCED SENSES WILL LEAD HIM TO ME...
... NO MATTER WHERE I HIDE.

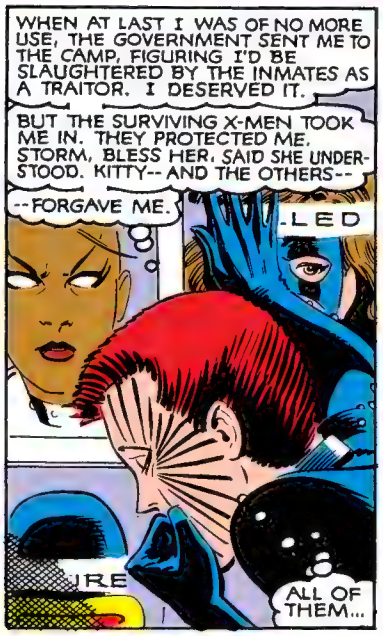

WHY IS HE DOING THIS?!
WHAT'S-- HAPPENING?!!

MY COSTUME-- IT'S CHANGED! I'M NOT PHOENIX ANYMORE--
-- I'M A HOUND!
I DON'T RUN FROM MUTIES, WOLVERINE. I HUNT THEM!


NO!
SKA
RASH!

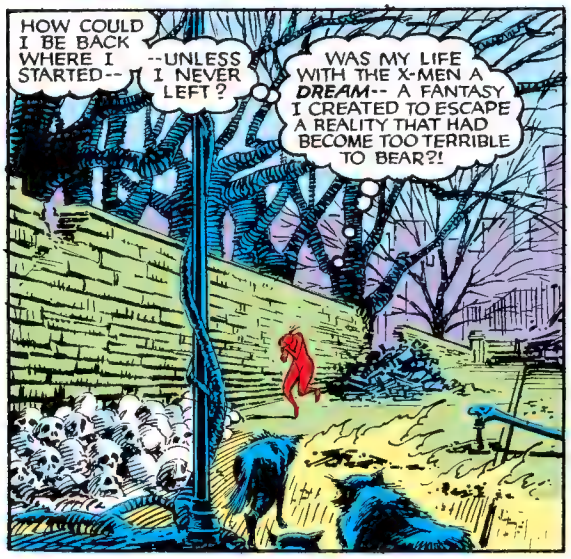

BUT HOW CAN I DENY THE EVIDENCE OF MY OWN EYES?!
LIKE WOLVERINE, I WAS THE BEST THERE WAS AT WHAT I DID. BUT WHAT I DID BEST WAS...
...IS...


...OBSCENE.
CAPTURED
CAPTURED
I BETRAYED MY OWN KIND. I HELPED THE GOVERNMENT CAPTURE MUTANTS, IMPRISON THEM IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS...
KILLED
KILLED
CAPTURED
...AND... KILL SO MANY OF THEM.
CAPTURED
KILLED

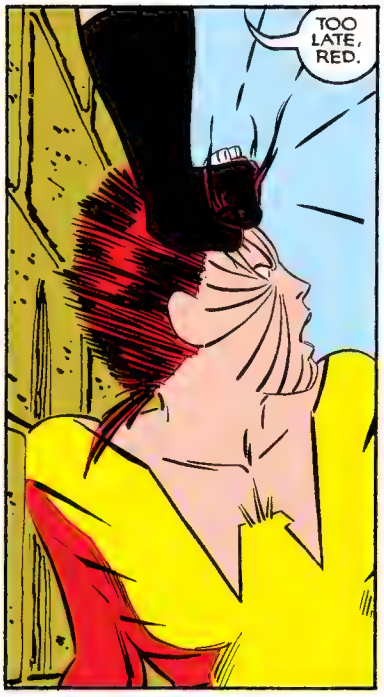

WHEN AT LAST I WAS OF NO MORE USE, THE GOVERNMENT SENT ME TO THE CAMP, FIGURING I'D BE SLAUGHTERED BY THE INMATES AS A TRAITOR. I DESERVED IT.
BUT THE SURVIVING X-MEN TOOK ME IN. THEY PROTECTED ME. STORM, BLESS HER, SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD. KITTY-- AND THE OTHERS--
--FORGAVE ME.
ALL OF THEM...

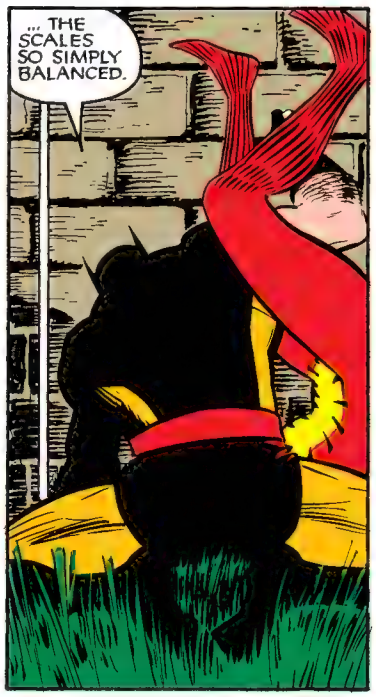
...SAVE ONE.
OUR WORLD WAS DYING, OUR RACE DESTROYED.
ONE BY ONE, THOSE FEW REMAINING X-MEN WERE KILLED...
...UNTIL I ALONE WAS LEFT.

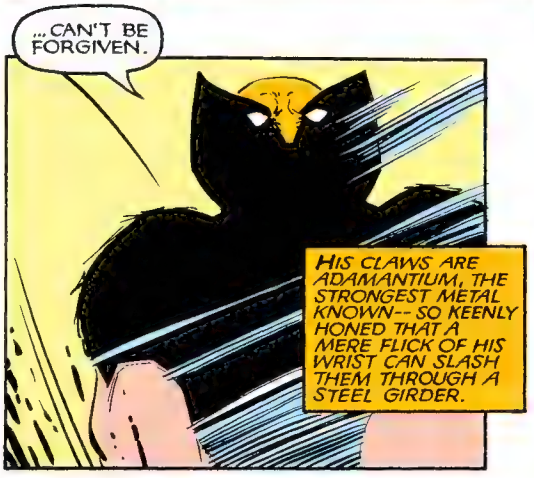
SOMEHOW, I USED MY POWER AS PHOENIX TO ESCAPE INTO THE PAST. I FLED TO THE TIME BEFORE I WAS BORN, HOPING-- PRAYING FOR A CHANCE TO PREVENT THIS APOCALYPSE.
I SOUGHT OUT THE X-MEN--AND, AGAIN, THEY TOOK ME IN. THEY BECAME MY FAMILY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY MEMORY, I FOUND MYSELF AT PEACE.
I WAS HAPPY.


HOW COULD I BE BACK WHERE I STARTED--
--UNLESS I NEVER LEFT?
WAS MY LIFE WITH THE X-MEN A DREAM-- A FANTASY I CREATED TO ESCAPE A REALITY THAT HAD BECOME TOO TERRIBLE TO BEAR?!

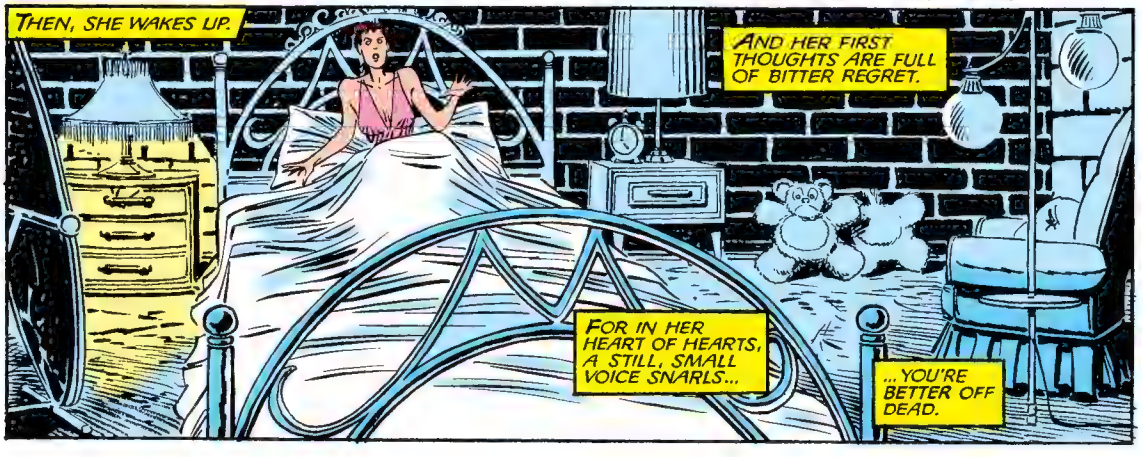
NO!
NO!
NO!
IT HAS TO BE TRUE, IT HAS TO!
WITHOUT THAT SECOND CHANCE, I CAN NEVER MAKE UP FOR THE AWFUL THINGS I'VE DONE!



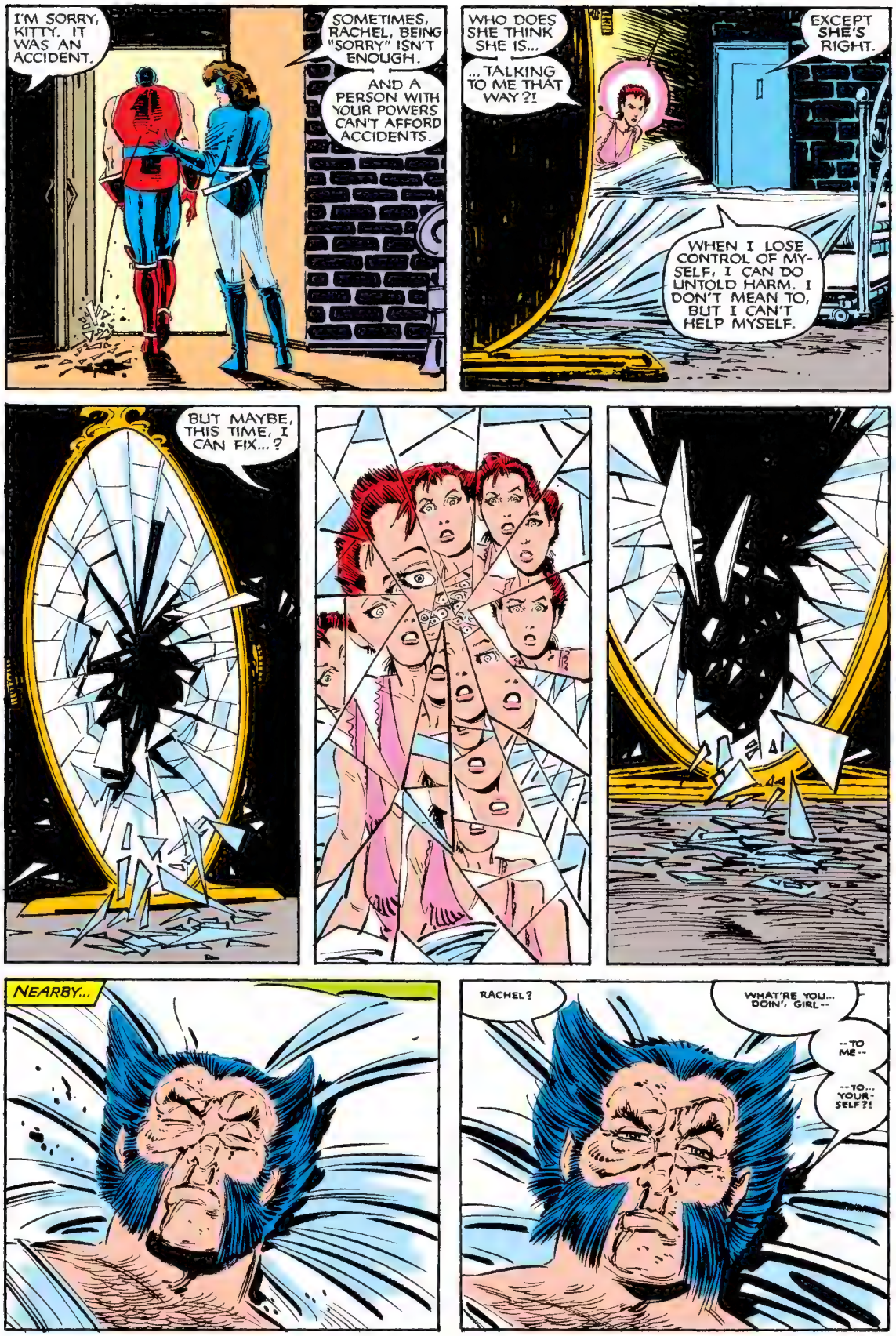


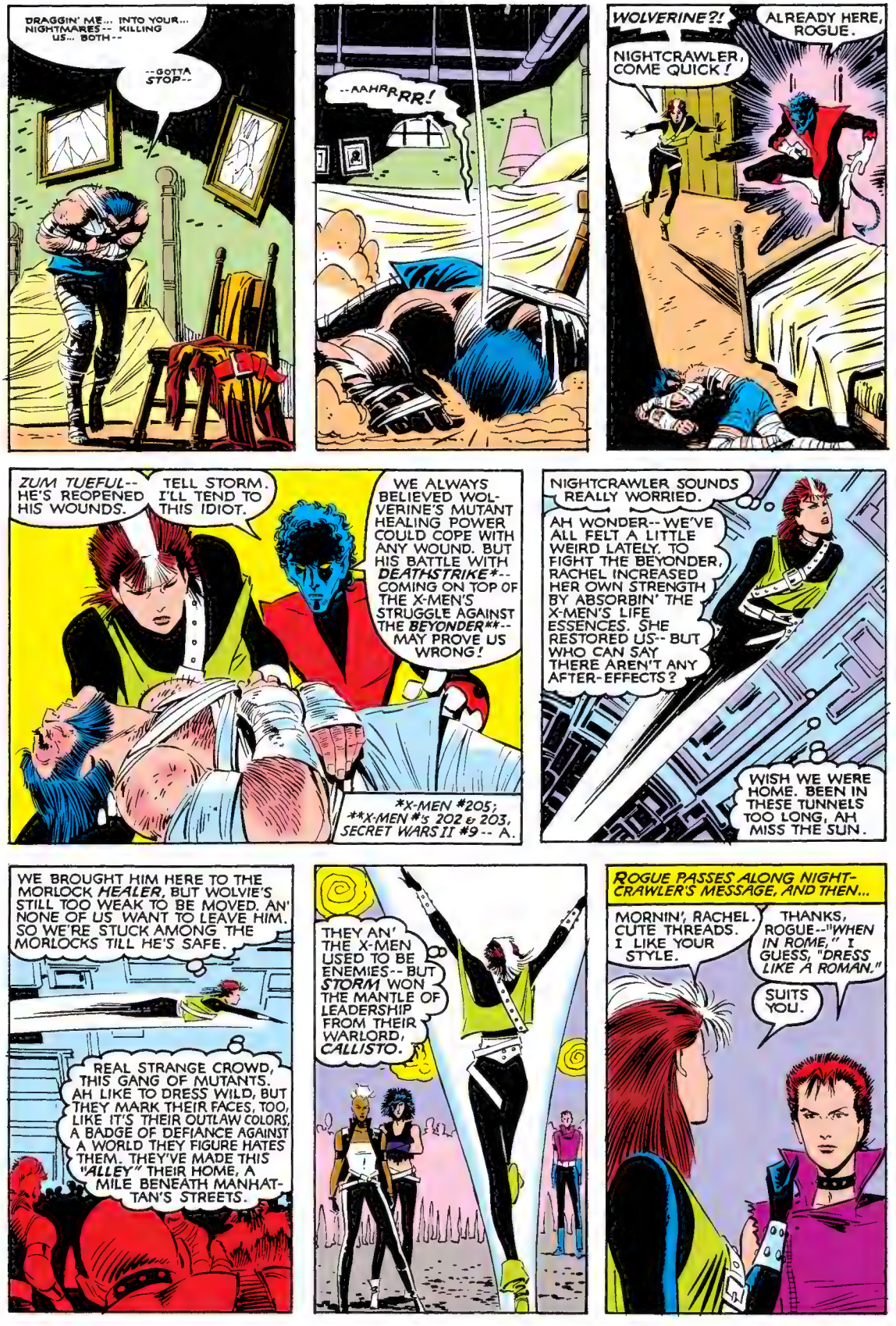

...CAN'T BE FORGIVEN.
HIS CLAWS ARE ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN-- SO KEENLY HONED THAT A MERE FLICK OF HIS WRIST CAN SLASH THEM THROUGH A STEEL GIRDER.

THERE IS PAIN AS THEY PIERCE HER HEART, BUT SHE BARELY NOTICES. HER TORMENT AT LAST IS OVER. HER BURDEN CAN BE LAID DOWN. THE GHOSTS WILL BE FOREVER SILENT, AS SHE FINALLY JOINS THEM.

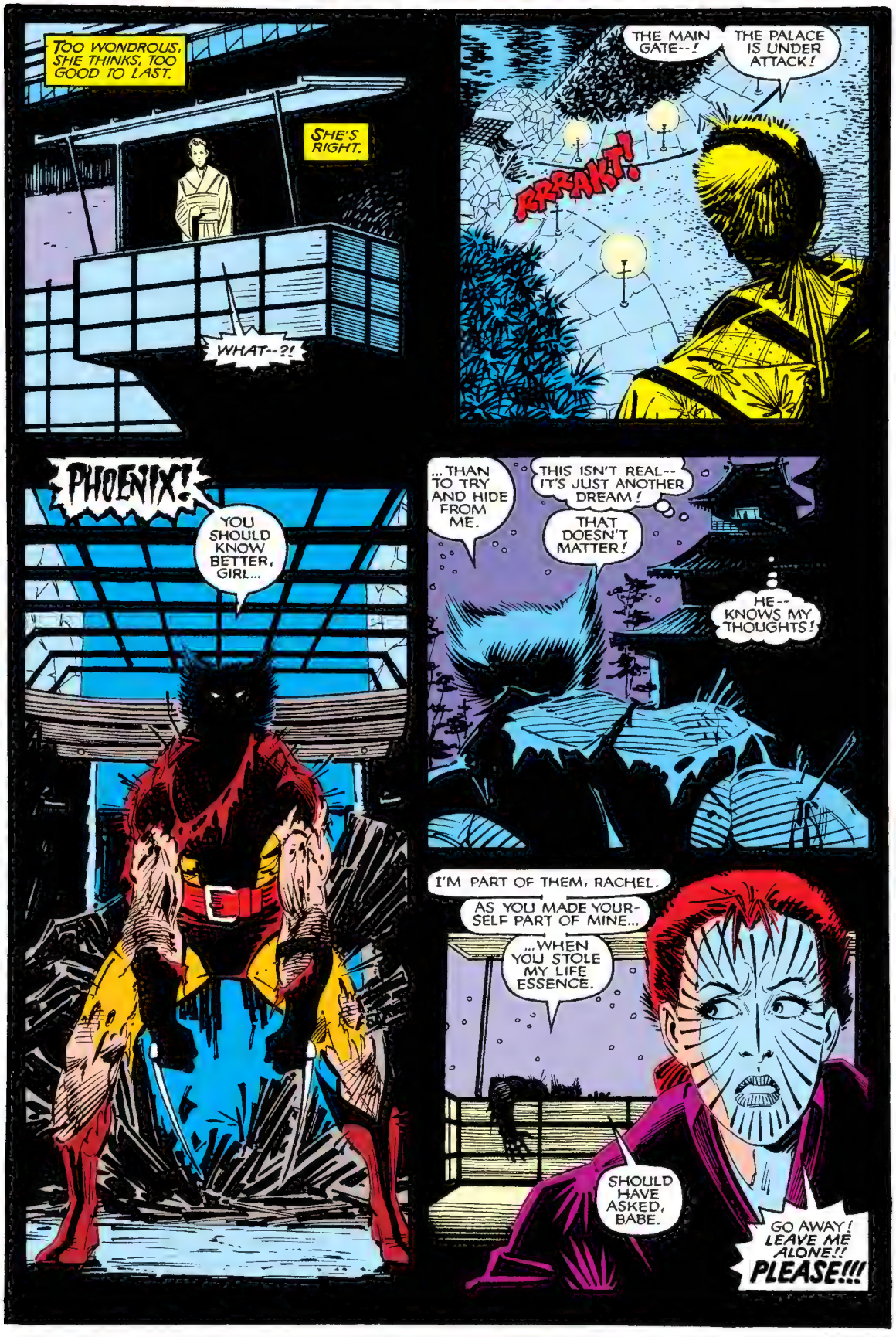

THEN, SHE WAKES UP.
AND HER FIRST THOUGHTS ARE FULL OF BITTER REGRET.
FOR IN HER HEART OF HEARTS, A STILL, SMALL VOICE SNARLS...
...YOU'RE BETTER OFF DEAD.

BETTER PEOPLE DESERVED TO SURVIVE, WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ME?
IT'S NOT FAIR!
AND WHY NOW--WHEN I'VE FINALLY FOUND THINGS TO CARE FOR: A FAMILY, FRIENDS TO CHERISH--AM I SO MISERABLE AND ASHAMED?
IT'S LIKE, THE MORE I GAIN, THE WORSE I FEEL.
THAT'S CRAZY.
SO MAYBE I AM, TOO?
MY REFLECTION--MY "HOUND" FACE!
GO AWAY!
YOU'RE THE CREATURE THAT'S DEAD-- NOT RACHEL SUMMERS, BUT THE MURDERING ANIMAL THE GOVERNMENT TURNED HER INTO-- YOU NO LONGER EXIST, I DENY YOU!
KARASH!
GO AWAY!
RACHEL?!
WE HEARD YOUR CRY-- ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
COLOSSUS! SHADOWCAT!!
THIS ISN'T MY ROOM AT OUR MANSION--WHERE ARE WE?!
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER GIRL.
YOU MUSTN'T LET THEM SEE HOW RATTLED YOU ARE.
NO PROBLEM, GUYS--REALLY.
JUST A BAD DREAM.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A BEAUT.
I GUESS I GOT SO SCARED I LOST CONTROL OF MY TK.
Sigh!
Y'KNOW, RAY, THE X-MEN ARE GUESTS HERE IN THE MORLOCK TUNNELS. THIS IS SOMEONE'S ROOM--YOU'RE WEARING BORROWED CLOTHES--AND THIS MIRROR IS PROBABLY A PRIZED POSSESSION.
GREAT WAY TO REPAY THE MORLOCKS' HOSPITALITY.


I'M SORRY, KITTY. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
SOMETIMES, RACHEL, BEING "SORRY" ISN'T ENOUGH.
AND A PERSON WITH YOUR POWERS CAN'T AFFORD ACCIDENTS.
WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS...
...TALKING TO ME THAT WAY?!
EXCEPT SHE'S RIGHT.
WHEN I LOSE CONTROL OF MYSELF, I CAN DO UNTOLD HARM. I DON'T MEAN TO, BUT I CAN'T HELP MYSELF.
BUT MAYBE, THIS TIME, I CAN FIX...?
NEARBY...
RACHEL?
WHAT'RE YOU... DOIN', GIRL--
--TO ME--
--TO... YOURSELF?!

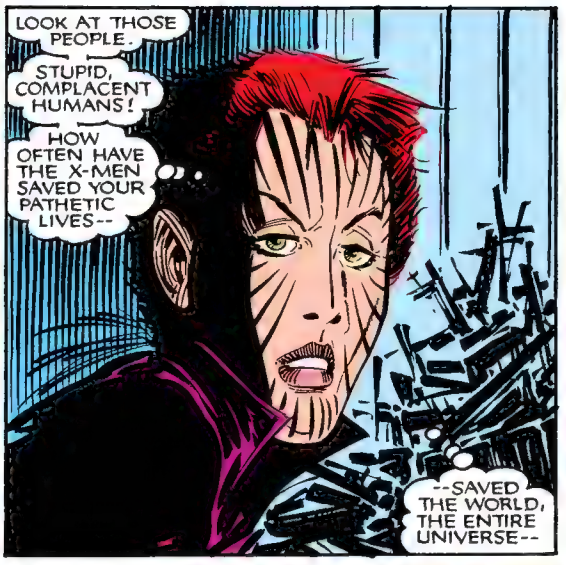

DRAGGIN' ME... INTO YOUR... NIGHTMARES-- KILLING US... BOTH--
--GOTTA STOP--
--AAHRRRR!
WOLVERINE?!
ALREADY HERE, ROGUE.
NIGHTCRAWLER, COME QUICK!
ZUM TUEFUL-- HE'S REOPENED HIS WOUNDS.
TELL STORM. I'LL TEND TO THIS IDIOT.
WE ALWAYS BELIEVED WOLVERINE'S MUTANT HEALING POWER COULD COPE WITH ANY WOUND. BUT HIS BATTLE WITH DEATHSTRIKE*-- COMING ON TOP OF THE X-MEN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BEYONDER**-- MAY PROVE US WRONG!
*X-MEN #205; **X-MEN #'s 202 & 203, SECRET WARS II #9 -- A.
NIGHTCRAWLER SOUNDS REALLY WORRIED.
AH WONDER-- WE'VE ALL FELT A LITTLE WEIRD LATELY. TO FIGHT THE BEYONDER, RACHEL INCREASED HER OWN STRENGTH BY ABSORBIN' THE X-MEN'S LIFE ESSENCES. SHE RESTORED US-- BUT WHO CAN SAY THERE AREN'T ANY AFTER-EFFECTS?
WISH WE WERE HOME. BEEN IN THESE TUNNELS TOO LONG, AH MISS THE SUN.
WE BROUGHT HIM HERE TO THE MORLOCK HEALER, BUT WOLVIE'S STILL TOO WEAK TO BE MOVED. AN' NONE OF US WANT TO LEAVE HIM. SO WE'RE STUCK AMONG THE MORLOCKS TILL HE'S SAFE.
REAL STRANGE CROWD, THIS GANG OF MUTANTS. AH LIKE TO DRESS WILD, BUT THEY MARK THEIR FACES, TOO, LIKE IT'S THEIR OUTLAW COLORS, A BADGE OF DEFIANCE AGAINST A WORLD THEY FIGURE HATES THEM. THEY'VE MADE THIS "ALLEY" THEIR HOME, A MILE BENEATH MANHATTAN'S STREETS.
THEY AN' THE X-MEN USED TO BE ENEMIES-- BUT STORM WON THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP FROM THEIR WARLORD, CALLISTO.
ROGUE PASSES ALONG NIGHTCRAWLER'S MESSAGE, AND THEN...
MORNIN', RACHEL. CUTE THREADS. I LIKE YOUR STYLE.
THANKS, ROGUE--"WHEN IN ROME," I GUESS, "DRESS LIKE A ROMAN."
SUITS YOU.

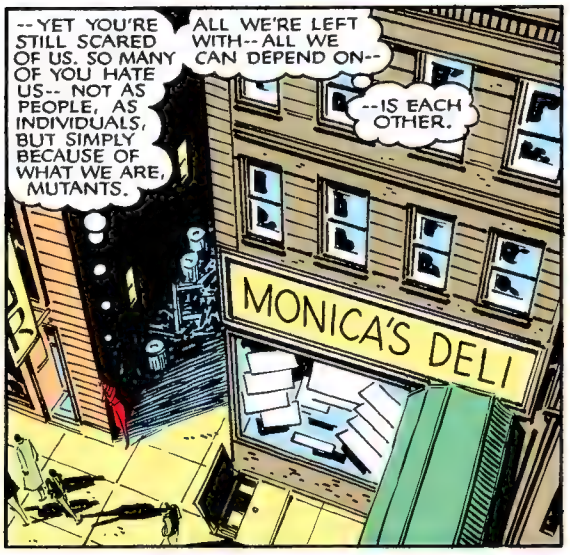
HOW'S WOLVERINE?
HE LIVES.
AND, WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD...
...STORM TURNS HER BACK ON RACHEL...
...AND CONTINUES HER DISCUSSION WITH CALLISTO.
WELL, EXCUSE ME, LADY!
SHE'S SHUTTING ME OUT OF HER MIND, AS WELL. ALL THE X-MEN HAVE CLOSED THEIR THOUGHTS TO ME!
ARE YOU REALLY SURPRISED, SUGAR...
...AFTER THE STUNT YOU PULLED IN SAN FRANCISCO WHEN YOU USED OUR LIFE-ESSENCES TO FIGHT THE BEYONDER?
I BELIEVED I WAS RIGHT, ROGUE.
AIN'T THE POINT. YOU ASKED FOR MY HELP, AN' I GAVE IT.
BUT YOU DIDN'T ASK COLOSSUS OR WOLVERINE. AN' STORM SAID NO.
YOU TOOK HER LIFE FORCE ANYWAY. AN' WHILE YOU ASKED SHADOWCAT, THE KID'S WONDERIN' NOW IF THAT DECISION WAS REALLY HER OWN.
DOES SHE--DO YOU--BELIEVE I'D FORCE SUCH A CHOICE?
BUT YOU'RE A TELEPATH, RAY--AT THAT TIME, ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL IN CREATION-- YOU WERE DRIVEN, DESPERATE, ABSOLUTELY, FANATICALLY SURE OF WHAT YOU WERE DOIN'.
CAN YOU TRULY SAY YOUR SUB-CONSCIOUS WASN'T PROMPTING US TO MAKE THE CHOICE YOU WANTED?
THE AIR IS SWEET, SCENTED WITH JASMINE AND HIGH MOUNTAIN PINE, DELICIOUSLY CRISP AND COOL.
SHE HAS NEVER KNOWN SUCH BEAUTY, SUCH SERENITY OF BODY AND SOUL...
... SUCH PEACE.

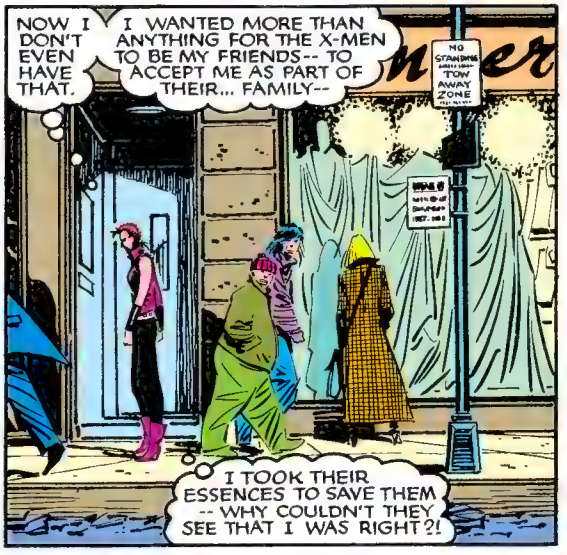

TOO WONDROUS, SHE THINKS, TOO GOOD TO LAST.
SHE'S RIGHT.
WHAT--?!
THE MAIN GATE--!
THE PALACE IS UNDER ATTACK!
RRRAK!
PHOENIX!
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER, GIRL...
...THAN TO TRY AND HIDE FROM ME.
THIS ISN'T REAL-- IT'S JUST ANOTHER DREAM!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER!
HE-- KNOWS MY THOUGHTS!
I'M PART OF THEM, RACHEL.
AS YOU MADE YOURSELF PART OF MINE...
...WHEN YOU STOLE MY LIFE ESSENCE.
SHOULD HAVE ASKED, BABE.
GO AWAY! LEAVE ME ALONE!! PLEASE!!!

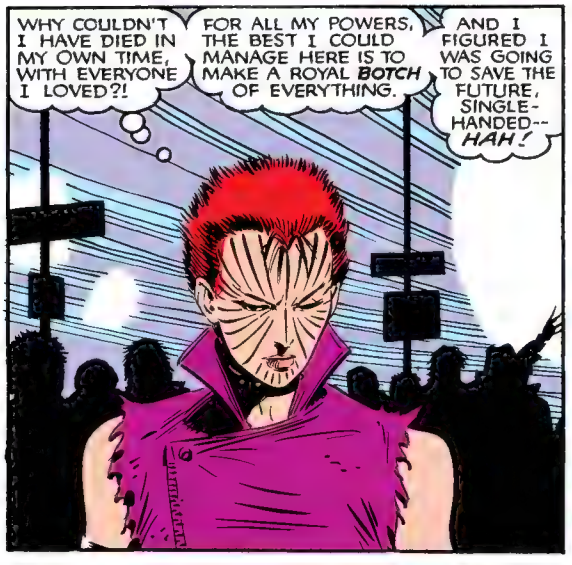
CAN'T DO THAT.
THE INITIAL DREAM CAME MOSTLY FROM MY HEAD, MY OWN MEMORIES!
THIS SETTING IS JAPANESE-- I MUST BE DRAWING THE IMAGES FROM WOLVERINE'S.
IF I WAKE MYSELF UP--IF I BREAK THE PSIONIC RAPPORT THAT BINDS US TOGETHER--I CAN SAVE MYSELF!
NOTHING'S HAPPENING!
I CAN'T BREAK FREE!
WOLVERINE--DON'T--WE'RE FRIENDS!
FRIENDSHIP INVOLVES TRUST.
YOU BETRAYED MINE.

Gasp!
WHERE--?! AN ALLEY-- THE SURFACE-- BUT HOW--DON'T REMEMBER --MUST HAVE WANDERED UP HERE-- FALLEN ASLEEP-- DOESN'T MATTER.
I'M STILL ALIVE.
HOORAY FOR ME.
201


LOOK AT THOSE PEOPLE.
STUPID, COMPLACENT HUMANS!
HOW OFTEN HAVE THE X-MEN SAVED YOUR PATHETIC LIVES--
--SAVED THE WORLD, THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE--

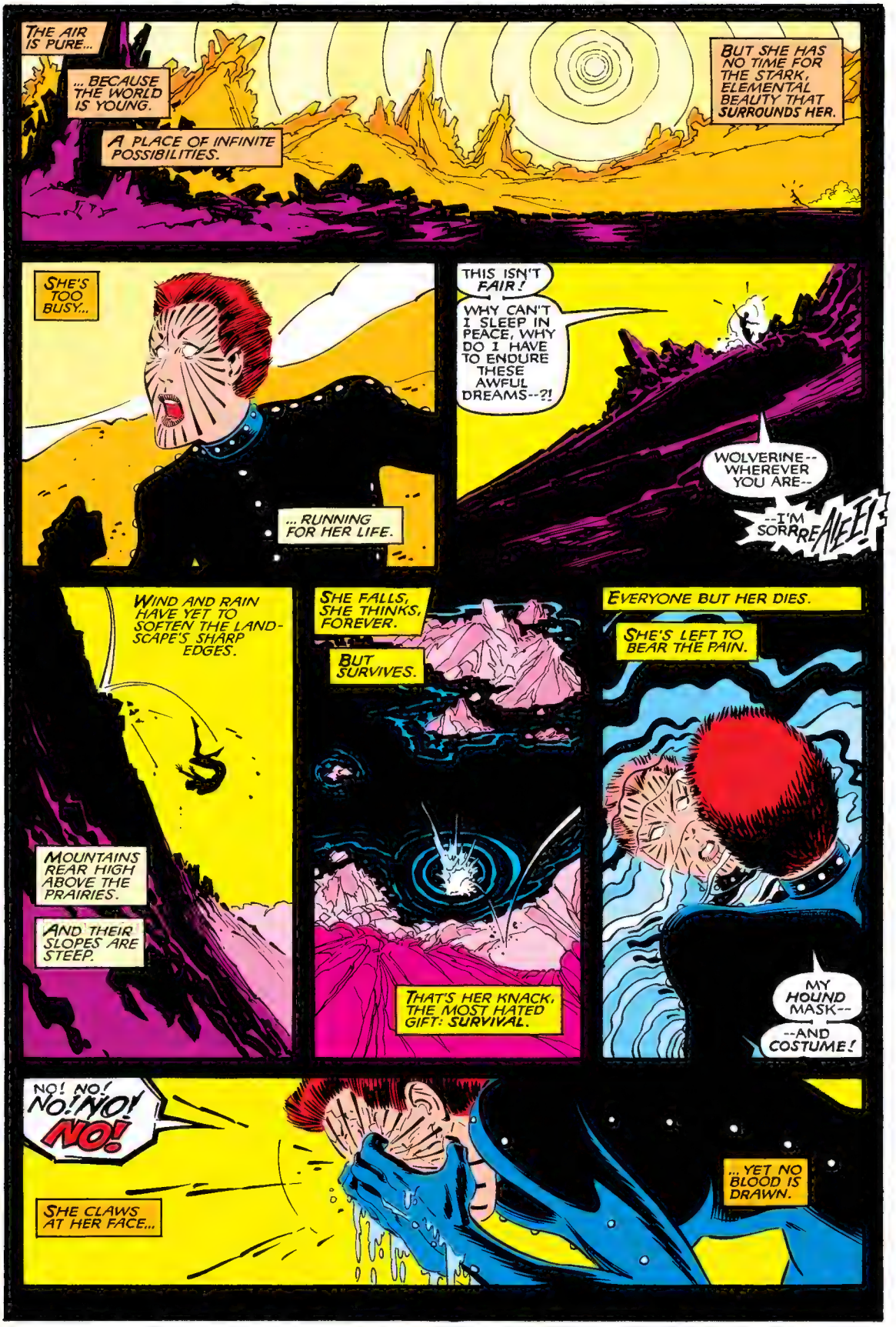

--YET YOU'RE STILL SCARED OF US. SO MANY OF YOU HATE US-- NOT AS PEOPLE, AS INDIVIDUALS, BUT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF WHAT WE ARE, MUTANTS.
ALL WE'RE LEFT WITH--ALL WE CAN DEPEND ON--
--IS EACH OTHER.
MONICA'S DELI


NOW I DON'T EVEN HAVE THAT.
I WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING FOR THE X-MEN TO BE MY FRIENDS-- TO ACCEPT ME AS PART OF THEIR... FAMILY--
NO STANDING TOW AWAY ZONE
I TOOK THEIR ESSENCES TO SAVE THEM -- WHY COULDN'T THEY SEE THAT I WAS RIGHT?!

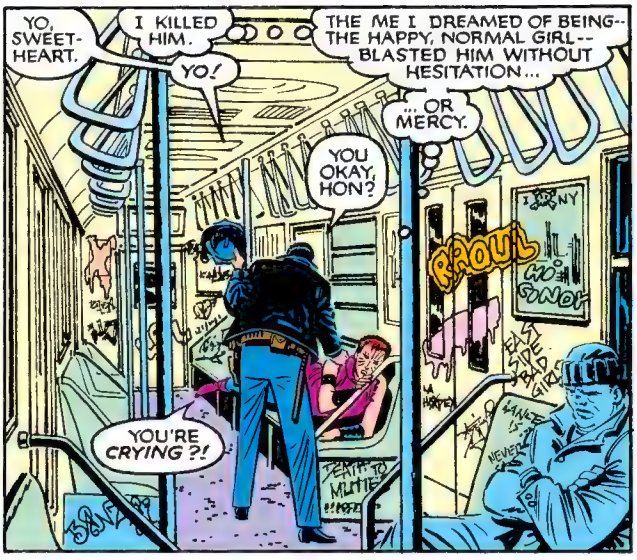

WHY COULDN'T I HAVE DIED IN MY OWN TIME, WITH EVERYONE I LOVED?!
FOR ALL MY POWERS, THE BEST I COULD MANAGE HERE IS TO MAKE A ROYAL BOTCH OF EVERYTHING.
AND I FIGURED I WAS GOING TO SAVE THE FUTURE, SINGLE-HANDED-- HAH!

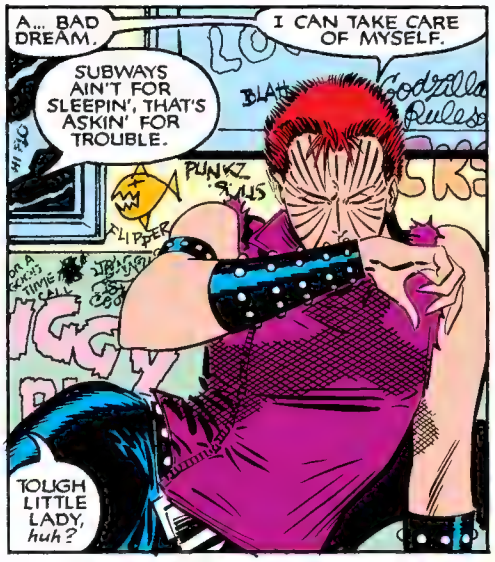
WAKE UP, BABY. FACE REALITY.
I TRIED TO SUPERCHARGE WOLVERINE'S HEALING POWERS-- AS I DID ONCE BEFORE*--BUT THIS TIME IT DIDN'T WORK. I ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE.
MAYBE THAT'S WHAT INTENSIFIED OUR DREAMLINK?
I'M USELESS. A TOTAL WASTE. A LOSER.

* X-MEN #202 -- AnnN.


THE AIR IS PURE...
... BECAUSE THE WORLD IS YOUNG.
A PLACE OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.
BUT SHE HAS NO TIME FOR THE STARK, ELEMENTAL BEAUTY THAT SURROUNDS HER.
SHE'S TOO BUSY...
... RUNNING FOR HER LIFE.
THIS ISN'T FAIR!
WHY CAN'T I SLEEP IN PEACE, WHY DO I HAVE TO ENDURE THESE AWFUL DREAMS--?!
WOLVERINE--WHEREVER YOU ARE--
--I'M SORRY!
WIND AND RAIN HAVE YET TO SOFTEN THE LANDSCAPE'S SHARP EDGES.
MOUNTAINS REAR HIGH ABOVE THE PRAIRIES.
AND THEIR SLOPES ARE STEEP.
SHE FALLS, SHE THINKS, FOREVER.
BUT SURVIVES.
THAT'S HER KNACK, THE MOST HATED GIFT: SURVIVAL.
EVERYONE BUT HER DIES.
SHE'S LEFT TO BEAR THE PAIN.
MY HOUND MASK--
--AND COSTUME!
NO! NO! NO! NO!
SHE CLAWS AT HER FACE...
...YET NO BLOOD IS DRAWN.

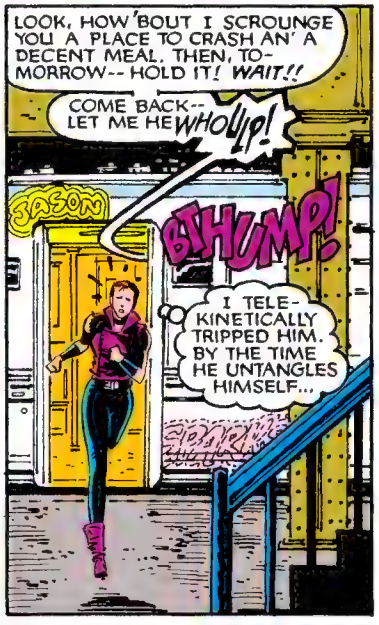
MY SKIN--MY CLOTHES--SHREDDING TO BITS?!
AND UNDER-NEATH--
--THE REAL ME!?!
THE RACHEL SUMMERS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.
IS THIS MY SECOND CHANCE?! CAN I START OVER, BEGIN AGAIN--
--oh, PLEASE, LET IT BE SO?!!
FORGETTING SOMETHING, RED?
WOLVERINE!
I'M DIFFERENT NOW--SEE--
--I'M BETTER.
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.

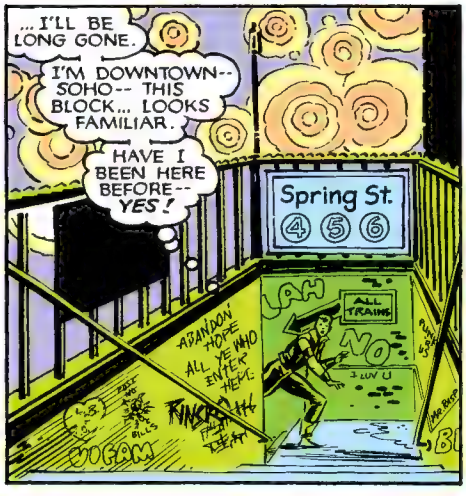

YO, SWEET-HEART.
I KILLED HIM.
YO!
THE ME I DREAMED OF BEING--THE HAPPY, NORMAL GIRL--BLASTED HIM WITHOUT HESITATION...
... OR MERCY.
YOU OKAY, HON?
YOU'RE CRYING?!
PROUL

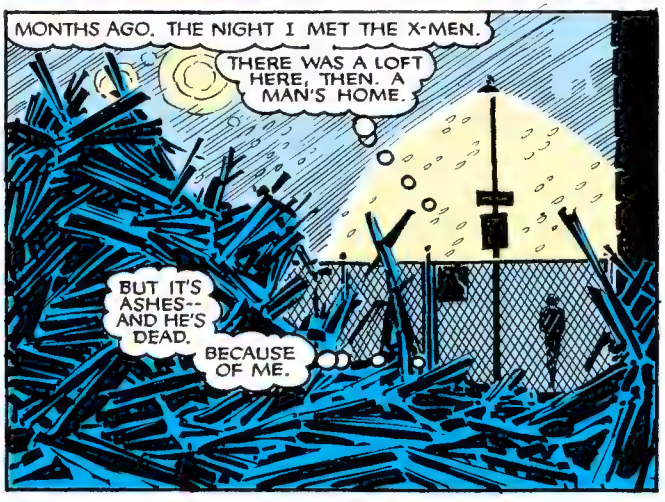

A... BAD DREAM.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
SUBWAYS AIN'T FOR SLEEPIN', THAT'S ASKIN' FOR TROUBLE.
TOUGH LITTLE LADY, huh?

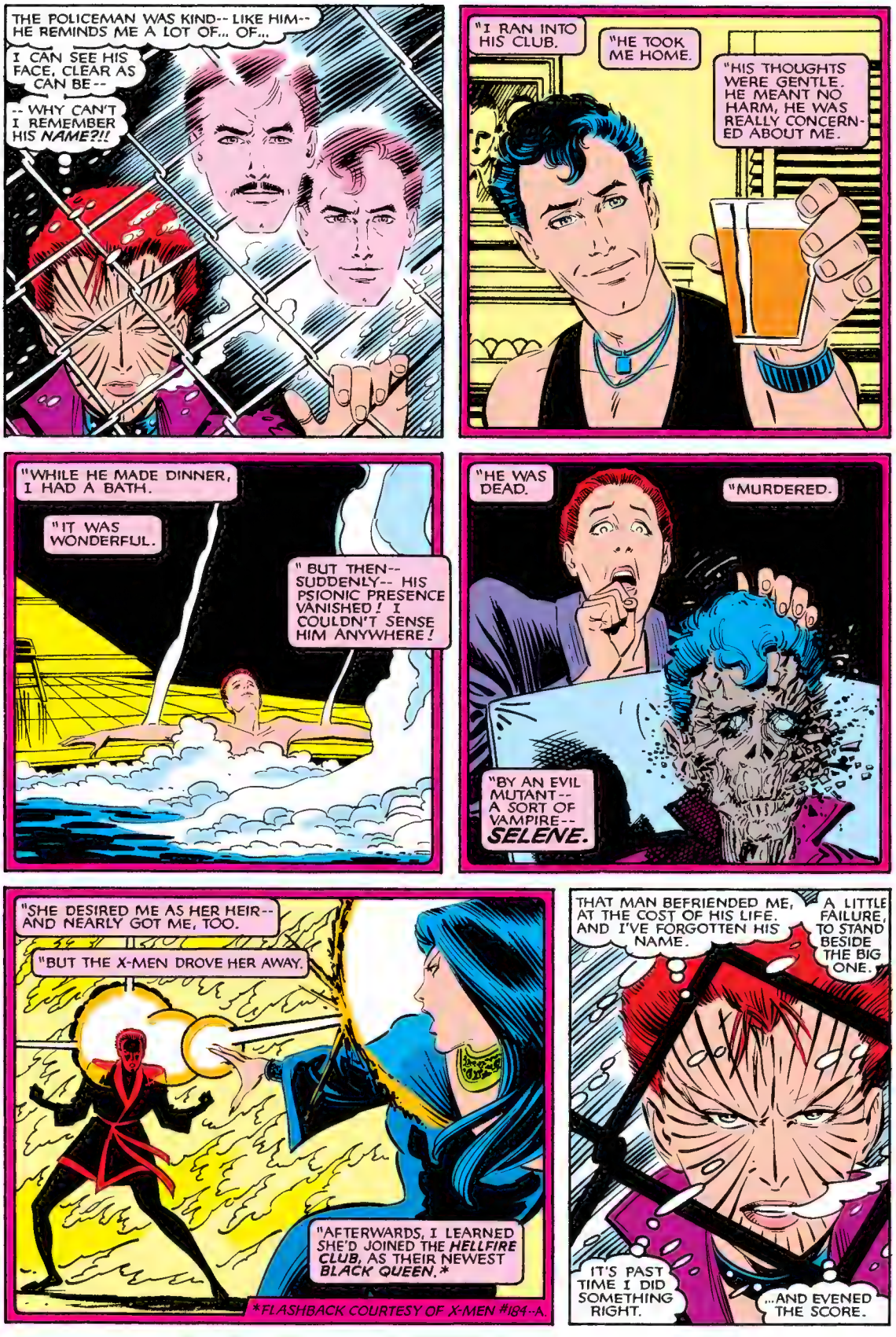
HERE, DRY YOUR EYES.
I'M JERRY. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
YOUR FOLKS KNOW YOU'RE OUT SO LATE?
MY PARENTS ARE DEAD.
SIRCO

I'M SORRY.
YOU ON THE RUN?
NO. AND I'M CLEAN, OFFICER. I DON'T DO DRUGS.
GOOD FOR YOU.

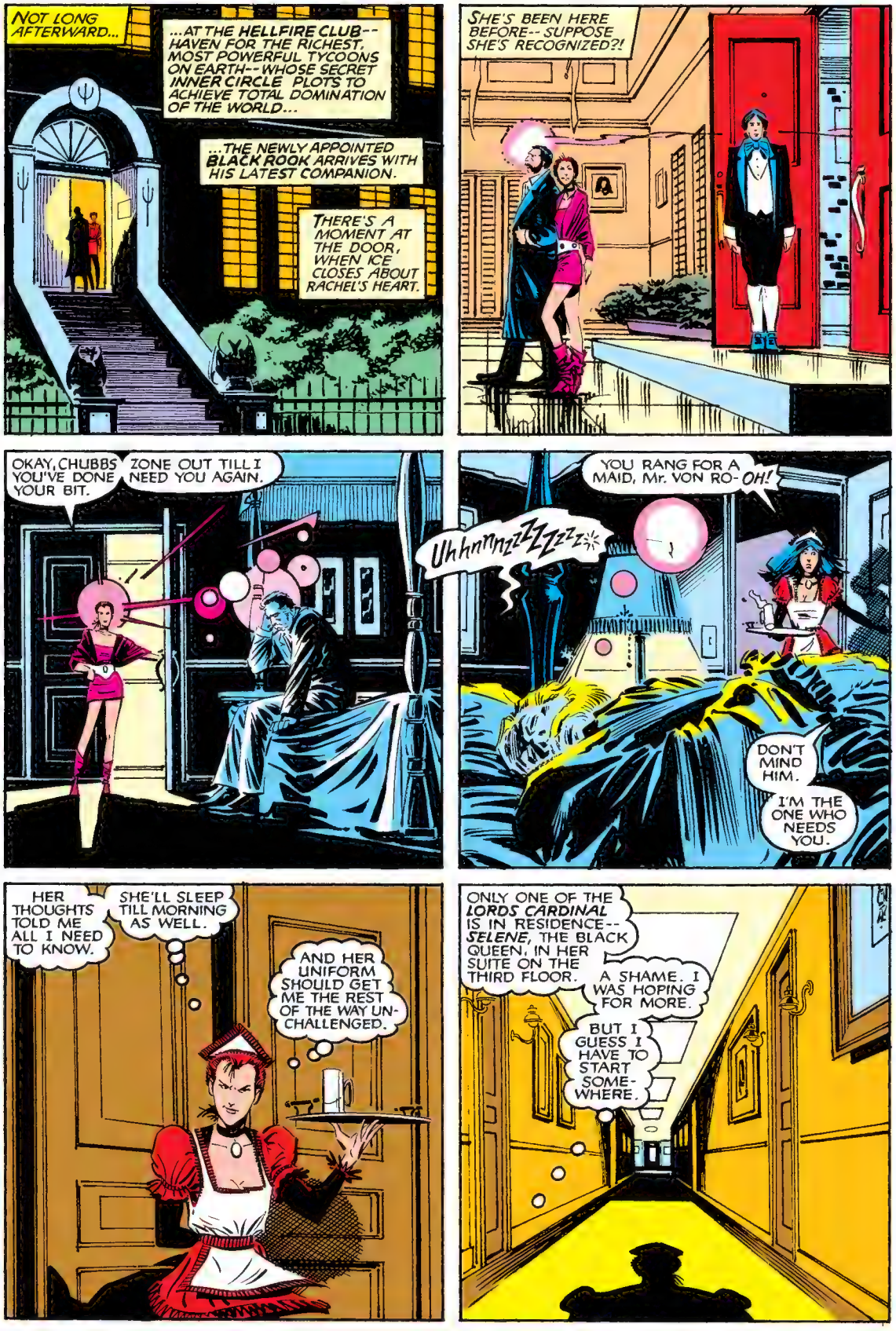

LOOK, HOW 'BOUT I SCROUNGE YOU A PLACE TO CRASH AN' A DECENT MEAL. THEN, TOMORROW-- HOLD IT! WAIT!!
COME BACK-- LET ME HE WHOLLP!
JASON
THUMP!
I TELE-KINETICALLY TRIPPED HIM. BY THE TIME HE UNTANGLES HIMSELF...

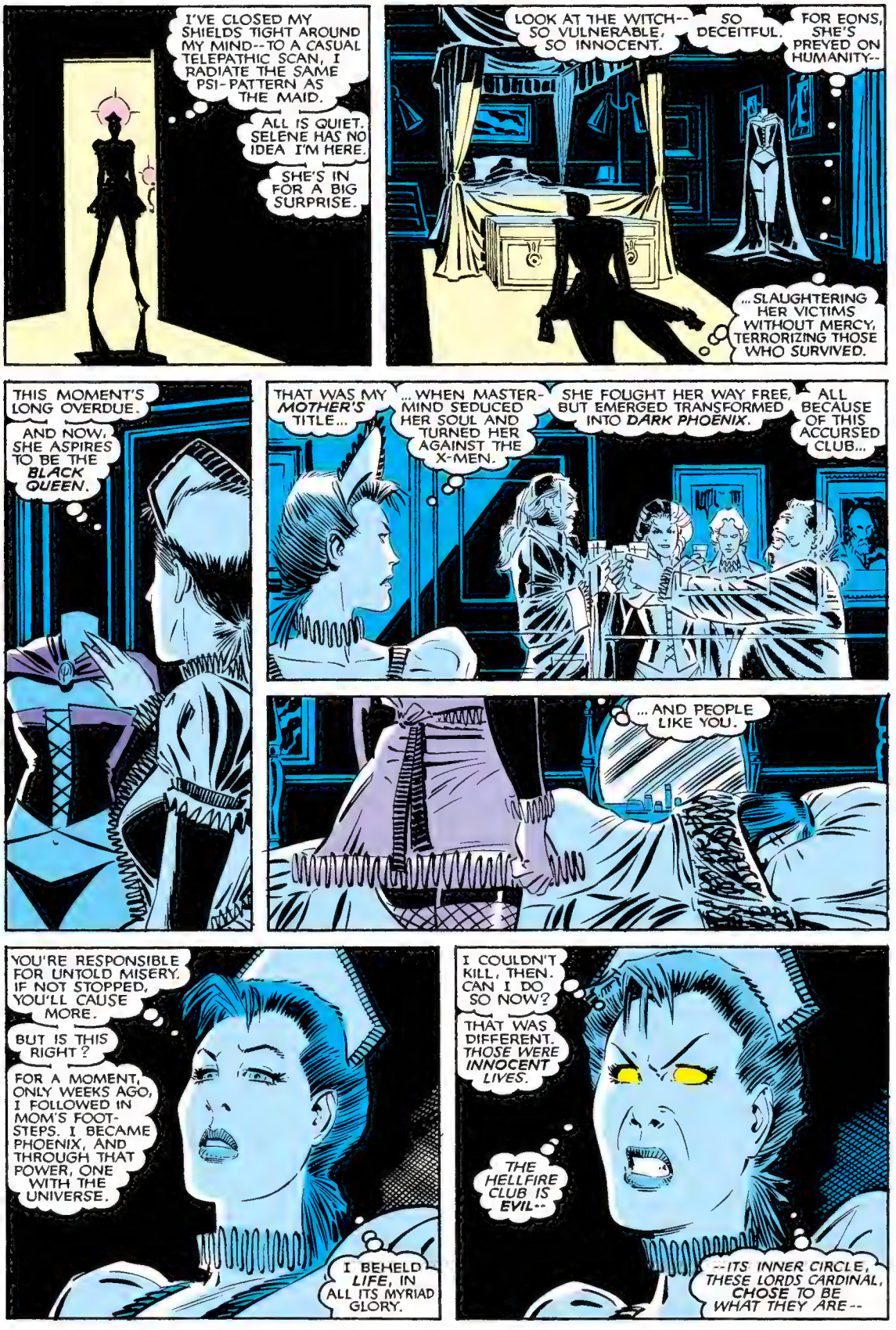

... I'LL BE LONG GONE.
I'M DOWNTOWN-- SOHO-- THIS BLOCK... LOOKS FAMILIAR.
HAVE I BEEN HERE BEFORE-- YES!
Spring St.
4 5 6
ALL TRAINS
ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE

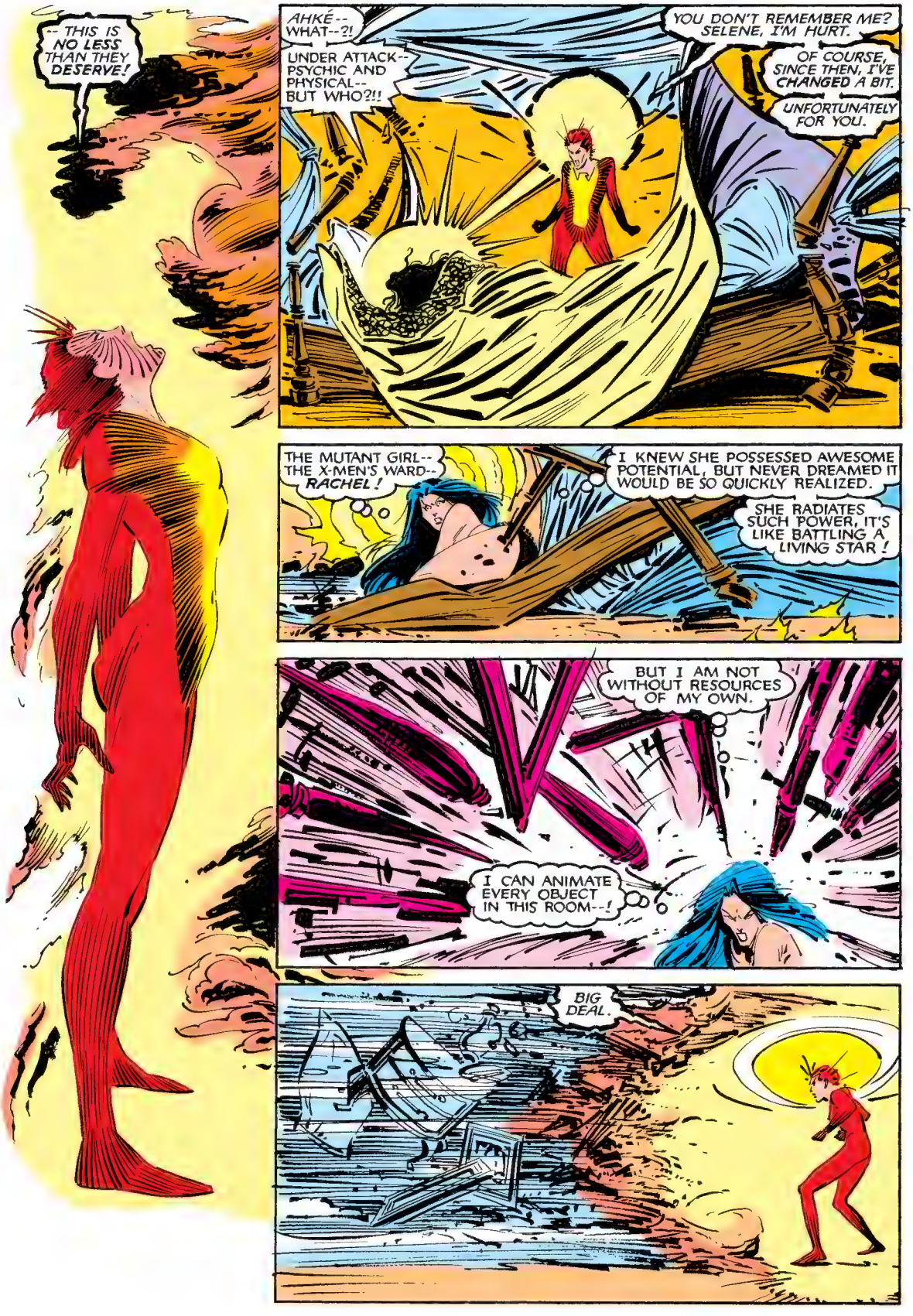

MONTHS AGO. THE NIGHT I MET THE X-MEN.
THERE WAS A LOFT HERE, THEN. A MAN'S HOME.
BUT IT'S ASHES-- AND HE'S DEAD.
BECAUSE OF ME.


THE POLICEMAN WAS KIND-- LIKE HIM-- HE REMINDS ME A LOT OF... OF...
I CAN SEE HIS FACE, CLEAR AS CAN BE--
-- WHY CAN'T I REMEMBER HIS NAME?!!
"I RAN INTO HIS CLUB.
"HE TOOK ME HOME.
"HIS THOUGHTS WERE GENTLE. HE MEANT NO HARM, HE WAS REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT ME.
"WHILE HE MADE DINNER, I HAD A BATH.
"IT WAS WONDERFUL.
" BUT THEN-- SUDDENLY-- HIS PSIONIC PRESENCE VANISHED! I COULDN'T SENSE HIM ANYWHERE!
"HE WAS DEAD.
"MURDERED.
"BY AN EVIL MUTANT-- A SORT OF VAMPIRE-- SELENE.
"SHE DESIRED ME AS HER HEIR-- AND NEARLY GOT ME, TOO.
"BUT THE X-MEN DROVE HER AWAY.
"AFTERWARDS, I LEARNED SHE'D JOINED THE HELLFIRE CLUB, AS THEIR NEWEST BLACK QUEEN.*
*FLASHBACK COURTESY OF X-MEN #184--A.
THAT MAN BEFRIENDED ME, AT THE COST OF HIS LIFE. AND I'VE FORGOTTEN HIS NAME.
A LITTLE FAILURE, TO STAND BESIDE THE BIG ONE.
IT'S PAST TIME I DID SOMETHING RIGHT.
...AND EVENED THE SCORE.

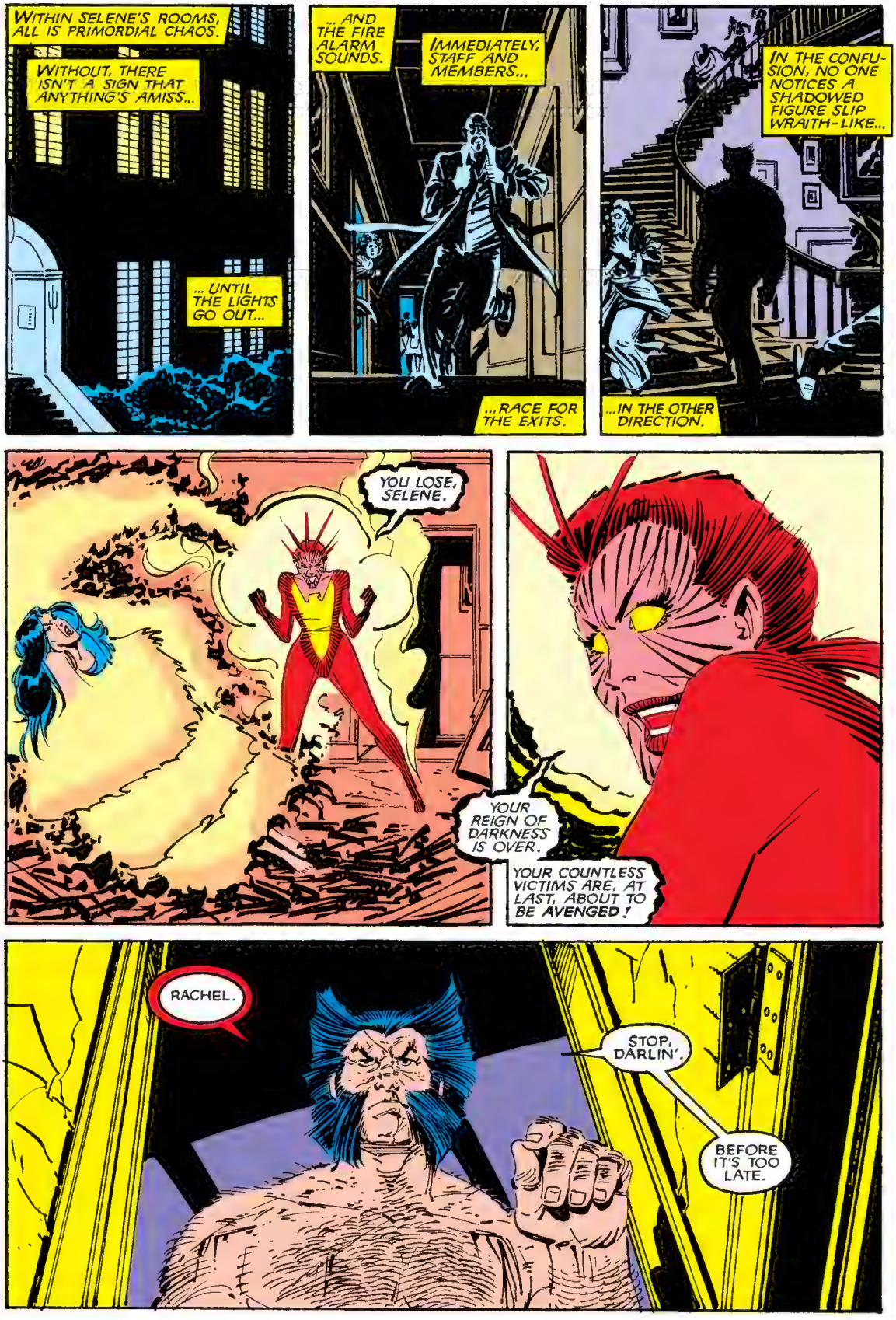
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE MORLOCK TUNNELS...
STORM! X-MEN!! COME QUICKLY!!!
WOLVERINE IS GONE!
THE DOPE.
SHOULDN'T BE HARD TO FIND, THOUGH. IN HIS CONDITION, HE'S LUCKY HE CAN STAND!
STORM, I JUST CHECKED RAY'S ROOM!
SHE'S SPLIT, TOO! HER BED HASN'T BEEN SLEPT IN!
SHE MUST HAVE TAKEN OFF YESTERDAY-- AND NONE OF US EVEN NOTICED!
COUNTRY'S FREE, BRAT. PEOPLE COME AN' GO...
...AS THEY PLEASE.
BUT CALLISTO--?!
LAST TIME AH SPOKE TO RAY, SHE WAS PRETTY BUMMED OUT.
AN' TRUTH TO TELL, NONE OF US WERE MAKIN' THINGS ANY EASIER FOR HER.
THIS DOUBLE DISAPPEARANCE MAY OR MAY NOT BE COINCIDENCE...
... BUT WOLVERINE MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE. WE CAN ALLOW OURSELVES THE LUXURY OF WORRYING ABOUT RACHEL AFTER WE HAVE FOUND HIM.
WANT THE MORLOCKS TO JOIN IN, WIND-RUNNER?
THANK YOU, CALLISTO, YOUR AID IS APPRECIATED.
LATER...
bding!
... AT THE MONARCH TOWERS...
FRIEDRICH VON ROEHM?
PHB
JA-- BUT WHO--?!
I'M AN ACQUAINTANCE OF YOUR "GODDESS," SELENE.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ME TO HER.

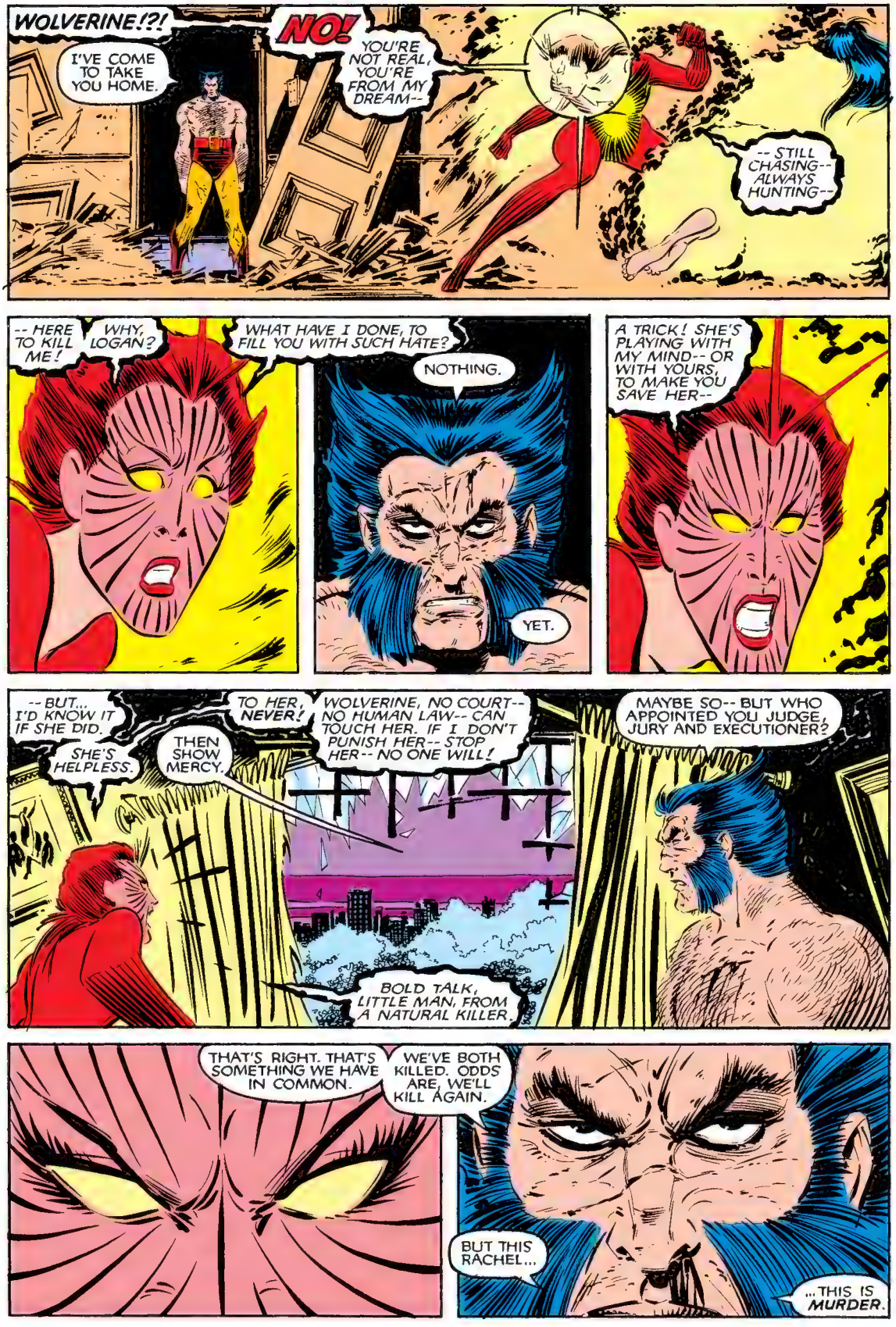

NOT LONG AFTERWARD...
...AT THE HELLFIRE CLUB--HAVEN FOR THE RICHEST, MOST POWERFUL TYCOONS ON EARTH--WHOSE SECRET INNER CIRCLE PLOTS TO ACHIEVE TOTAL DOMINATION OF THE WORLD...
...THE NEWLY APPOINTED BLACK ROOK ARRIVES WITH HIS LATEST COMPANION.
THERE'S A MOMENT AT THE DOOR, WHEN ICE CLOSES ABOUT RACHEL'S HEART.
SHE'S BEEN HERE BEFORE-- SUPPOSE SHE'S RECOGNIZED?!
OKAY, CHUBBS YOU'VE DONE YOUR BIT.
ZONE OUT TILL I NEED YOU AGAIN.
Uhhnnnzzzzzzzz
YOU RANG FOR A MAID, Mr. VON RO-
OH!
DON'T MIND HIM.
I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS YOU.
HER THOUGHTS TOLD ME ALL I NEED TO KNOW.
SHE'LL SLEEP TILL MORNING AS WELL.
AND HER UNIFORM SHOULD GET ME THE REST OF THE WAY UN-CHALLENGED.
ONLY ONE OF THE LORDS CARDINAL IS IN RESIDENCE-- SELENE, THE BLACK QUEEN, IN HER SUITE ON THE THIRD FLOOR.
A SHAME. I WAS HOPING FOR MORE.
BUT I GUESS I HAVE TO START SOME-WHERE.

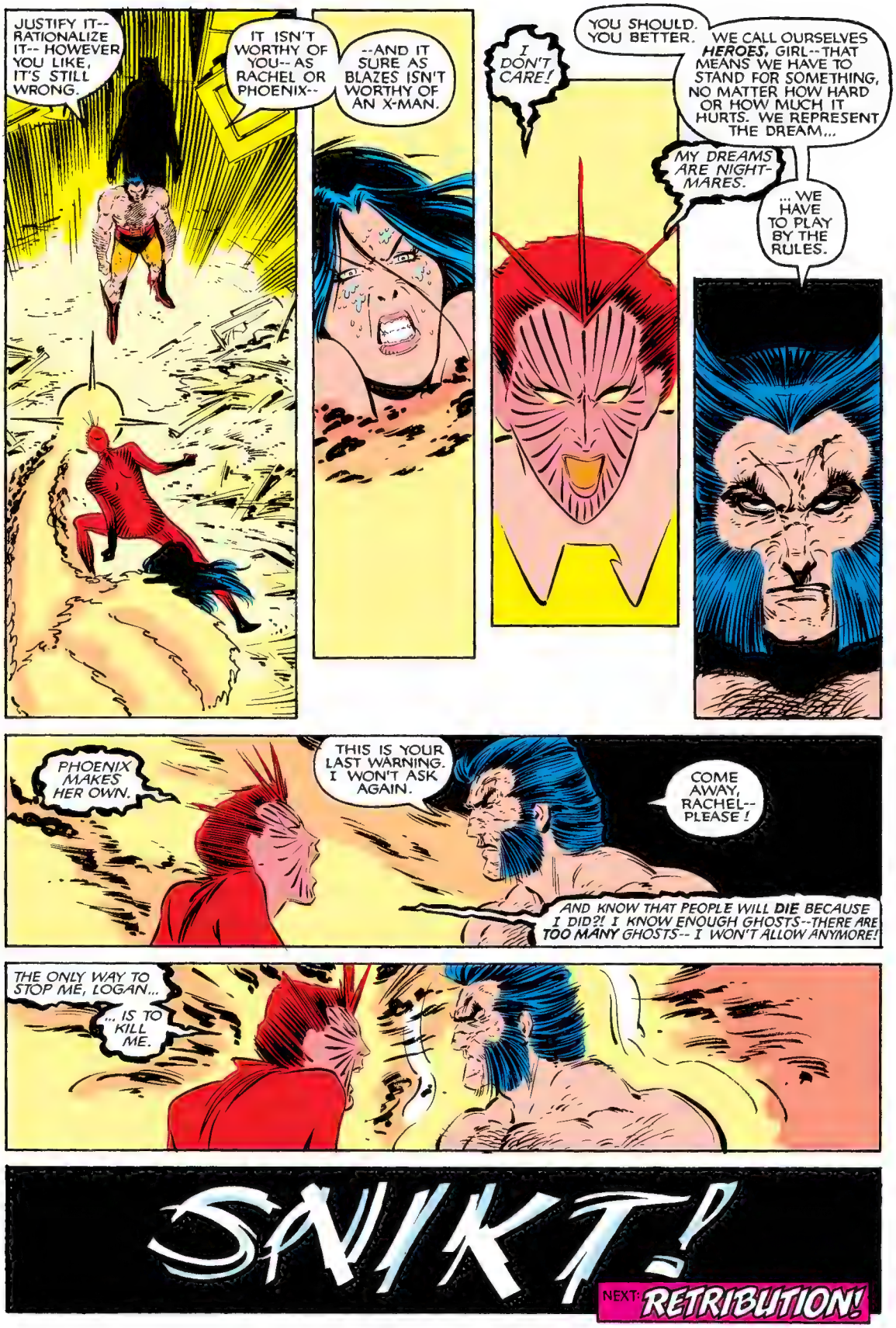

I'VE CLOSED MY SHIELDS TIGHT AROUND MY MIND--TO A CASUAL TELEPATHIC SCAN, I RADIATE THE SAME PSI-PATTERN AS THE MAID.
ALL IS QUIET. SELENE HAS NO IDEA I'M HERE.
SHE'S IN FOR A BIG SURPRISE.
LOOK AT THE WITCH--SO VULNERABLE, SO INNOCENT.
SO DECEITFUL.
FOR EONS, SHE'S PREYED ON HUMANITY--
...SLAUGHTERING HER VICTIMS WITHOUT MERCY, TERRORIZING THOSE WHO SURVIVED.
THIS MOMENT'S LONG OVERDUE.
AND NOW, SHE ASPIRES TO BE THE BLACK QUEEN.
THAT WAS MY MOTHER'S TITLE...
...WHEN MASTERMIND SEDUCED HER SOUL AND TURNED HER AGAINST THE X-MEN.
SHE FOUGHT HER WAY FREE, BUT EMERGED TRANSFORMED INTO DARK PHOENIX.
ALL BECAUSE OF THIS ACCURSED CLUB...
...AND PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR UNTOLD MISERY. IF NOT STOPPED, YOU'LL CAUSE MORE.
BUT IS THIS RIGHT?
FOR A MOMENT, ONLY WEEKS AGO, I FOLLOWED IN MOM'S FOOTSTEPS. I BECAME PHOENIX, AND THROUGH THAT POWER, ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE.
I BEHELD LIFE, IN ALL ITS MYRIAD GLORY.
I COULDN'T KILL, THEN. CAN I DO SO NOW?
THAT WAS DIFFERENT. THOSE WERE INNOCENT LIVES.
THE HELLFIRE CLUB IS EVIL--
--ITS INNER CIRCLE, THESE LORDS CARDINAL, CHOSE TO BE WHAT THEY ARE--


-- THIS IS NO LESS THAN THEY DESERVE!
AHKÉ-- WHAT--?!
UNDER ATTACK-- PSYCHIC AND PHYSICAL-- BUT WHO?!!
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME? SELENE, I'M HURT.
OF COURSE, SINCE THEN, I'VE CHANGED A BIT.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU.
THE MUTANT GIRL-- THE X-MEN'S WARD-- RACHEL!
I KNEW SHE POSSESSED AWESOME POTENTIAL, BUT NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE SO QUICKLY REALIZED.
SHE RADIATES SUCH POWER, IT'S LIKE BATTLING A LIVING STAR!
BUT I AM NOT WITHOUT RESOURCES OF MY OWN.
I CAN ANIMATE EVERY OBJECT IN THIS ROOM--!
BIG DEAL.

I NEED TIME-- TO RECOVER MY STRENGTH, TO PLAN--
--THE FLOOR WILL HOLD HER FAST, UNTIL...
YOU CAUGHT ME THIS WAY...
...WHEN WE FIRST MET.
THIS TIME, I'M READY.
FOR IT-- FOR ALL YOUR TRICKS.
DO YOU RECALL THAT NIGHT, VAMPIRE?!
THE MAN YOU KILLED...
...FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT HE WAS KIND TO ME?!
NICHOLAS DAMIANO.
A COURAGEOUS HEART, A NOBLE SOUL--
--HIS ESSENCE FED ME WELL.
YOU KNOW HIS NAME!!
I HONOR HIM, YES-- AS I DO ALL WHOM I SLAY--
--AS I SHALL YOU!
HE HAD MEANING TO ME AS HE OBVIOUSLY HAD NONE FOR YOU--
--ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED.
FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL SELENE HAS DREADED/YEARNED FOR THIS MOMENT...
...WHEN SHE FINALLY FACES A FOE WORTHY OF HER...
...CAPABLE EVEN OF DESTROYING HER.
SHE GAZES INTO HER YOUNG FOE'S HEART AND SOUL-- TO BEHOLD A HUNGER, A DARK SOLITUDE THAT RIVALS HER OWN, COUPLED WITH A RAGE THAT WILL NOT BE DENIED.


WITHIN SELENE'S ROOMS, ALL IS PRIMORDIAL CHAOS.
WITHOUT, THERE ISN'T A SIGN THAT ANYTHING'S AMISS...
...UNTIL THE LIGHTS GO OUT...
...AND THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS.
IMMEDIATELY, STAFF AND MEMBERS...
...RACE FOR THE EXITS.
IN THE CONFUSION, NO ONE NOTICES A SHADOWED FIGURE SLIP WRAITH-LIKE...
...IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.
YOU LOSE, SELENE.
YOUR REIGN OF DARKNESS IS OVER.
YOUR COUNTLESS VICTIMS ARE, AT LAST, ABOUT TO BE AVENGED!
RACHEL.
STOP, DARLIN'.
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.


WOLVERINE!?!
I'VE COME TO TAKE YOU HOME.
NO!
YOU'RE NOT REAL, YOU'RE FROM MY DREAM--
-- STILL CHASING-- ALWAYS HUNTING--
-- HERE TO KILL ME!
WHY, LOGAN?
WHAT HAVE I DONE, TO FILL YOU WITH SUCH HATE?
NOTHING.
YET.
A TRICK! SHE'S PLAYING WITH MY MIND-- OR WITH YOURS, TO MAKE YOU SAVE HER--
-- BUT... I'D KNOW IT IF SHE DID.
SHE'S HELPLESS.
THEN SHOW MERCY.
TO HER, NEVER!
WOLVERINE, NO COURT-- NO HUMAN LAW-- CAN TOUCH HER. IF I DON'T PUNISH HER-- STOP HER-- NO ONE WILL!
BOLD TALK, LITTLE MAN, FROM A NATURAL KILLER.
MAYBE SO-- BUT WHO APPOINTED YOU JUDGE, JURY AND EXECUTIONER?
THAT'S RIGHT. THAT'S SOMETHING WE HAVE IN COMMON.
WE'VE BOTH KILLED. ODDS ARE, WE'LL KILL AGAIN.
BUT THIS RACHEL...
...THIS IS MURDER.


JUSTIFY IT-- RATIONALIZE IT-- HOWEVER YOU LIKE, IT'S STILL WRONG.
IT ISN'T WORTHY OF YOU-- AS RACHEL OR PHOENIX--
--AND IT SURE AS BLAZES ISN'T WORTHY OF AN X-MAN.
I DON'T CARE!
YOU SHOULD. YOU BETTER.
WE CALL OURSELVES HEROES, GIRL--THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO STAND FOR SOMETHING, NO MATTER HOW HARD OR HOW MUCH IT HURTS. WE REPRESENT THE DREAM...
MY DREAMS ARE NIGHT-MARES.
... WE HAVE TO PLAY BY THE RULES.
PHOENIX MAKES HER OWN.
THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING. I WON'T ASK AGAIN.
COME AWAY, RACHEL-- PLEASE!
AND KNOW THAT PEOPLE WILL DIE BECAUSE I DID?! I KNOW ENOUGH GHOSTS--THERE ARE TOO MANY GHOSTS-- I WON'T ALLOW ANYMORE!
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP ME, LOGAN...
... IS TO KILL ME.
SNIKT!
NEXT: RETRIBUTION!

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THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
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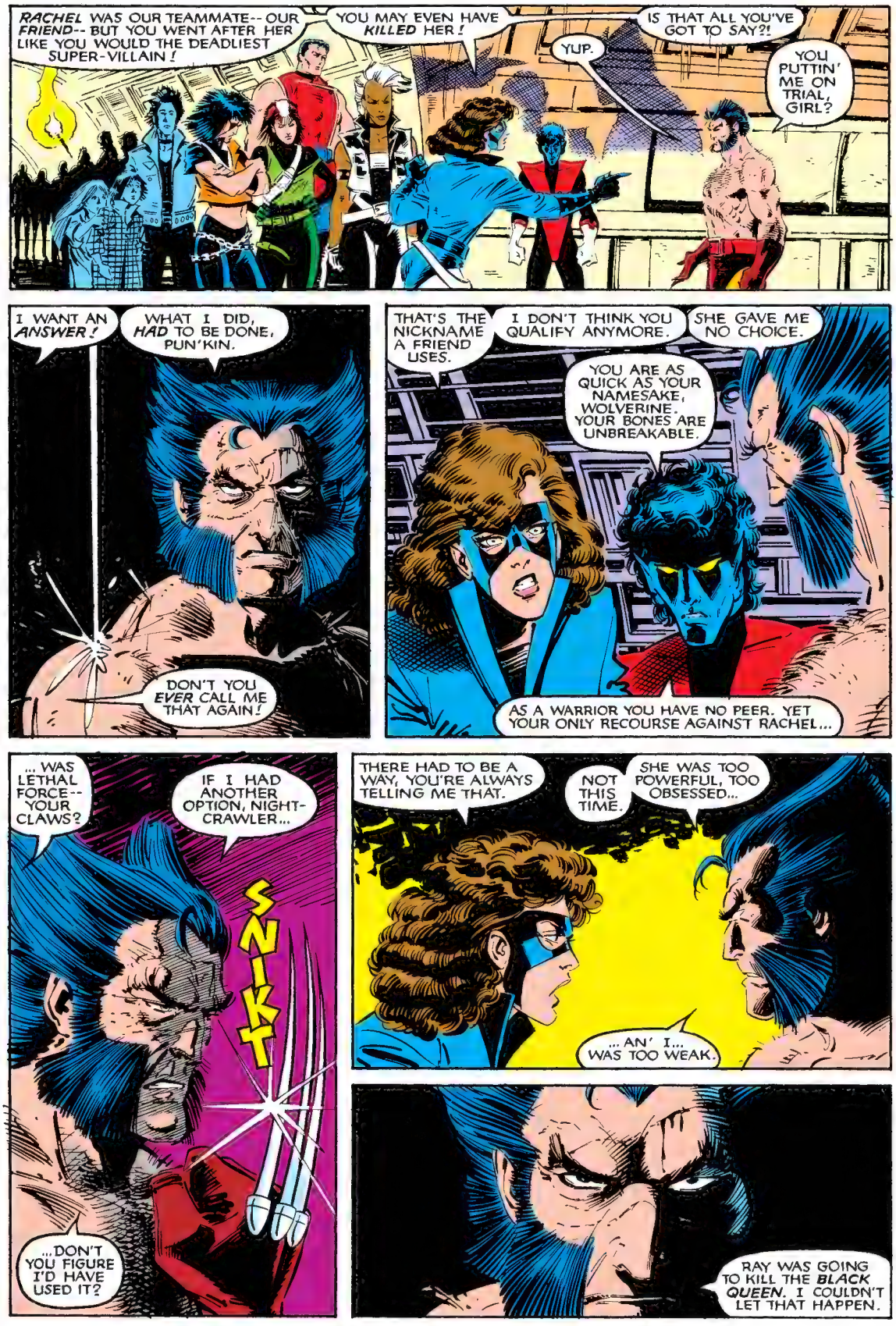
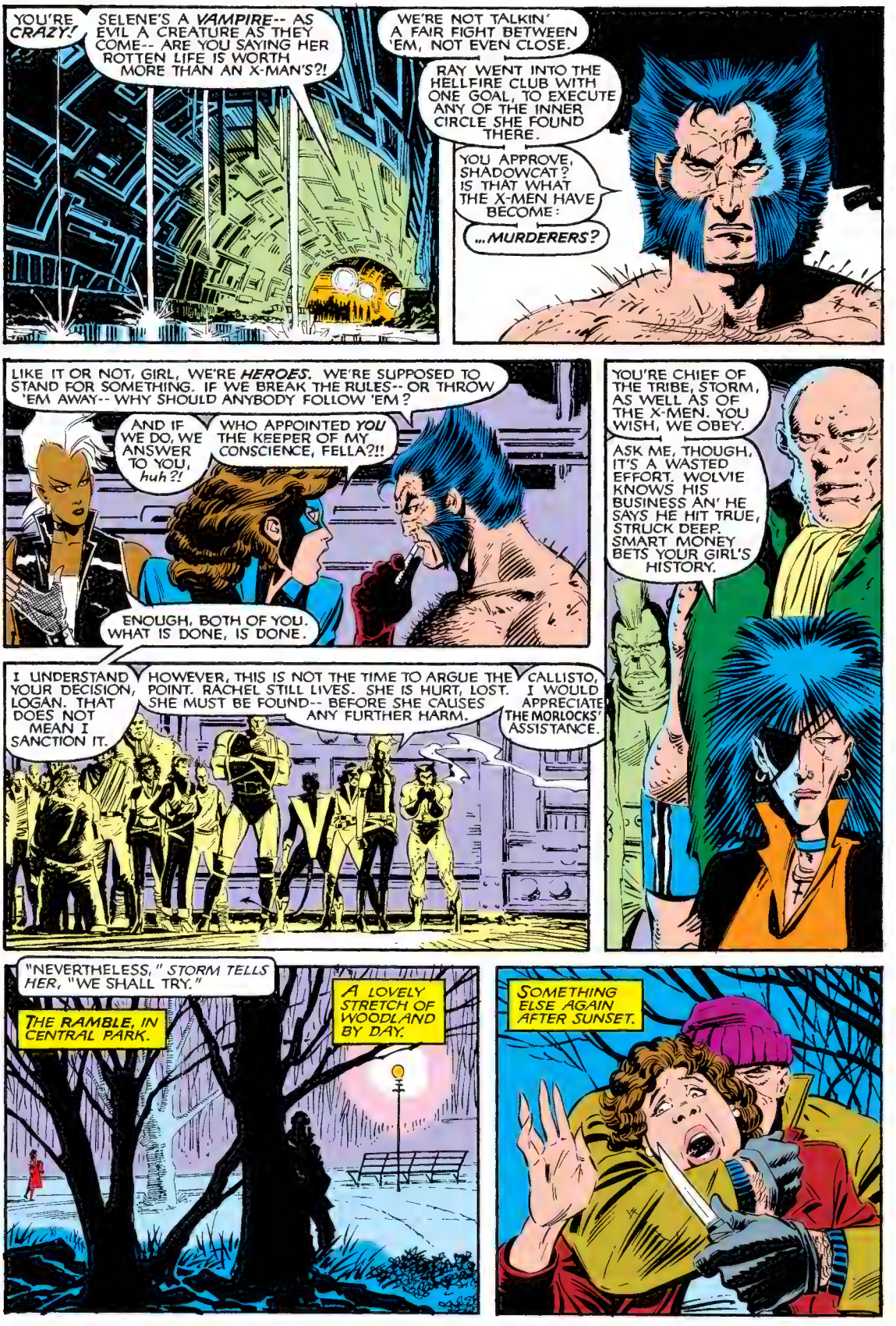
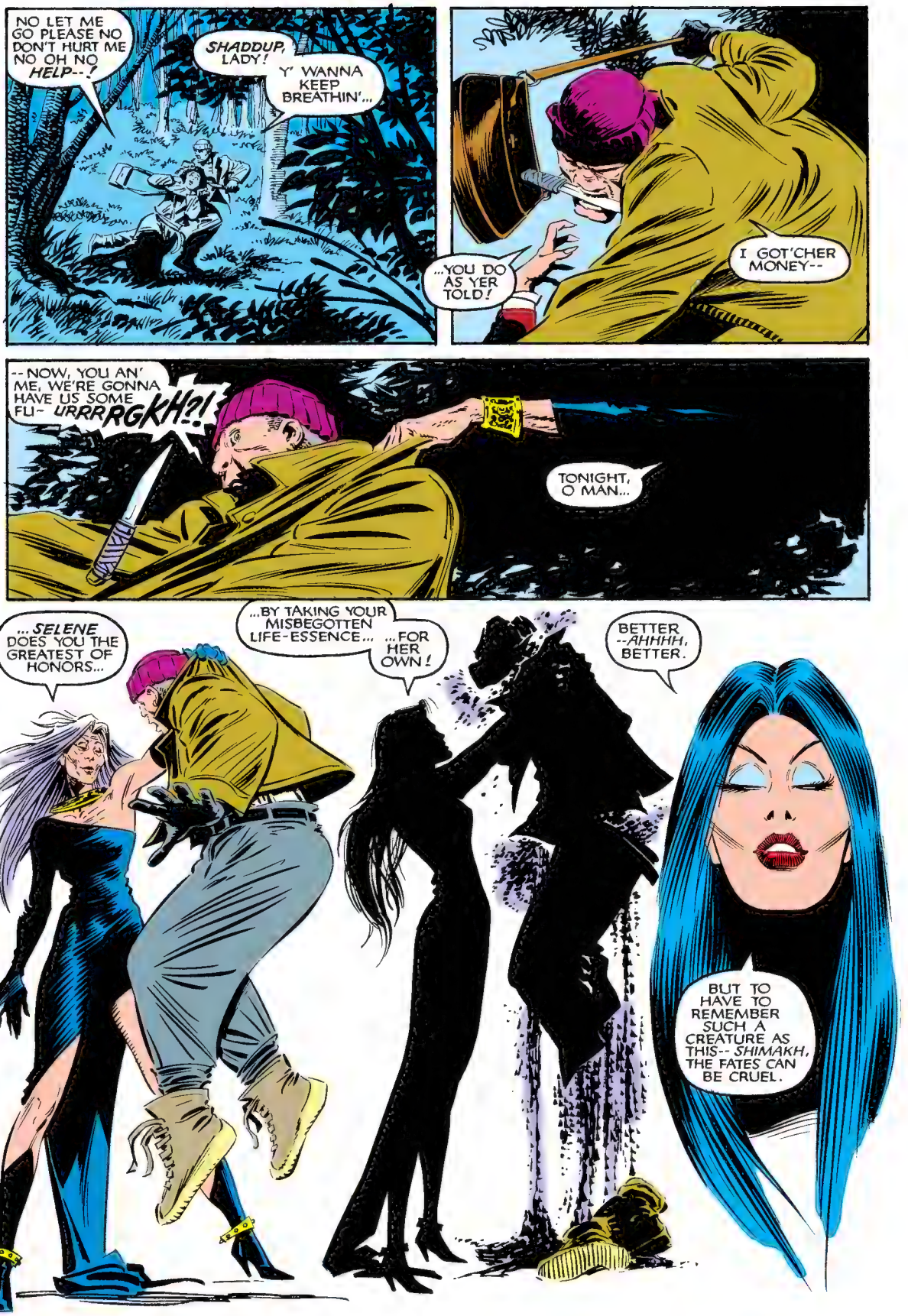
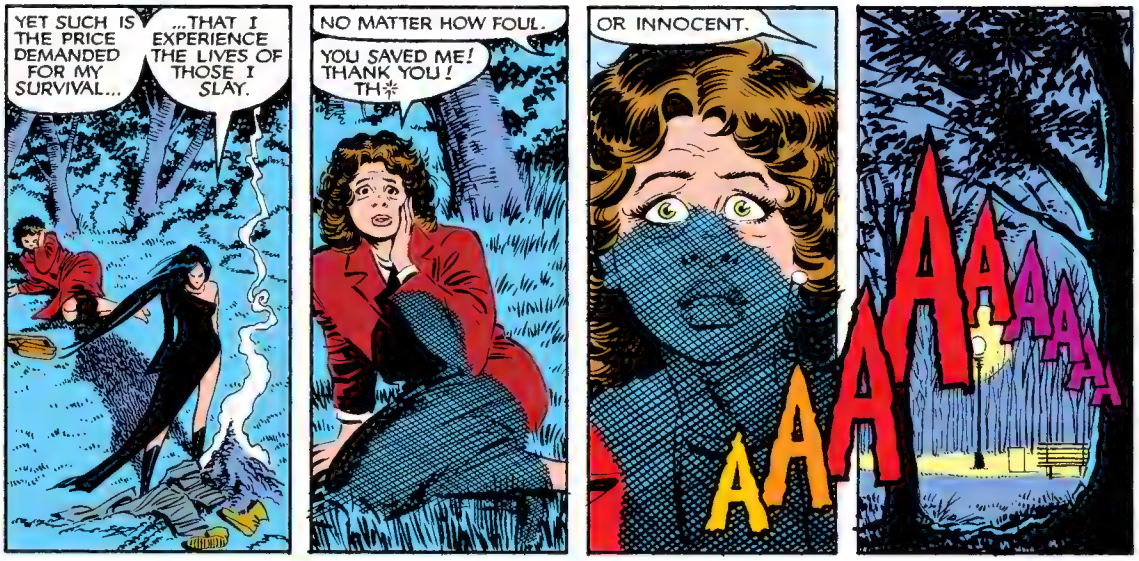
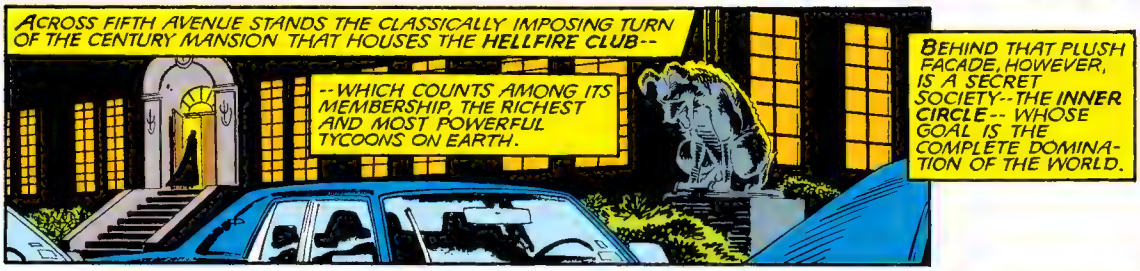
STAN LEE PRESENTS
RETRIBUTION
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
A MILE BENEATH MANHATTAN'S STREETS IS THE SHADOWED, SECRET PLACE WHERE THE MORLOCKS DWELL.
THEY'RE MUTANTS, SELF-PROCLAIMED OUTCASTS FROM A WORLD THAT MOSTLY FEARS THEM, SOLELY BECAUSE THEY'RE DIFFERENT.
IT'S HERE THAT THE X-MEN, MUTANTS ALSO, BUT HEROES, OFTTIMES SAVIORS OF THAT SELF-SAME WORLD, HUNTED AS OUTLAWS FOR THEIR TROUBLE-- HAVE COME TO LICK THEIR WOUNDS...
... AFTER WHAT MAY BE, FOR THE YOUNGEST OF THEM, SHADOWCAT, THE MOST AWFUL OF BETRAYALS.
WOLVERINE-- HOW COULD YOU?!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!?
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
JOHN ROMITA, JR. & DAN GREEN, ARTISTS
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF

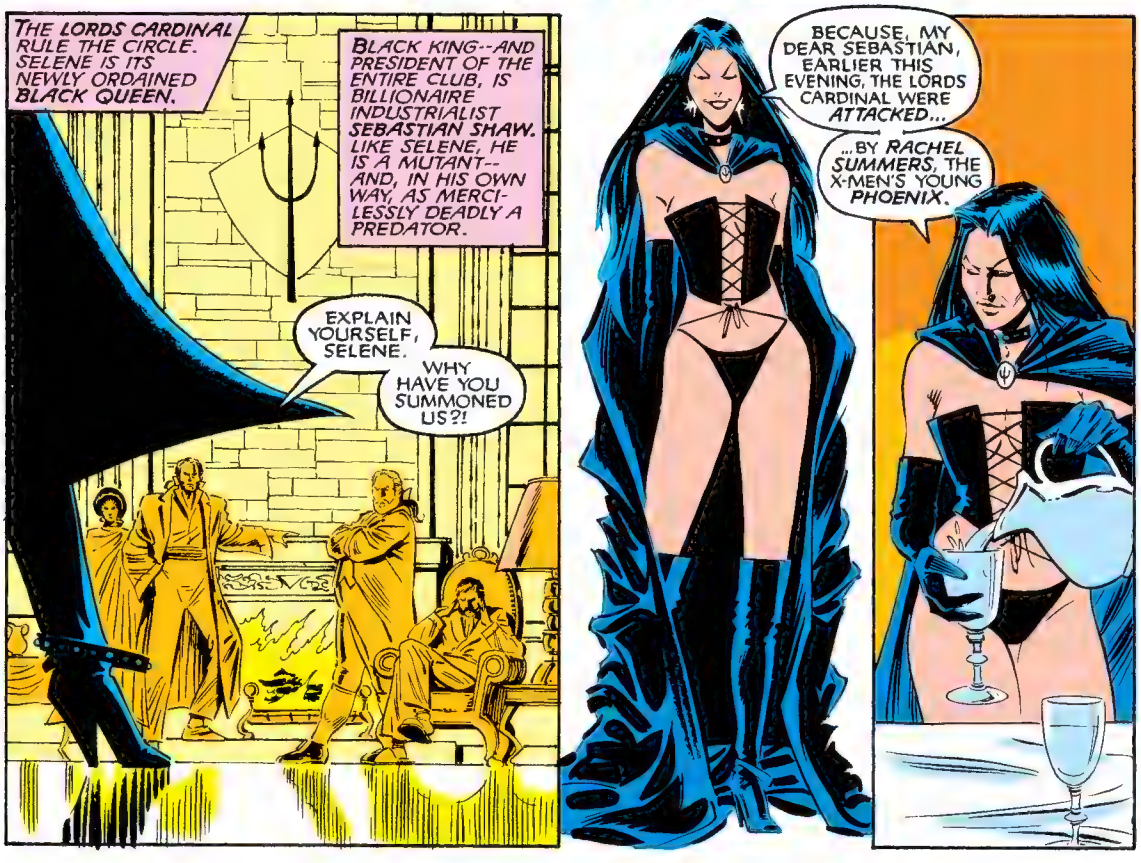

RACHEL WAS OUR TEAMMATE-- OUR FRIEND-- BUT YOU WENT AFTER HER LIKE YOU WOULD THE DEADLIEST SUPER-VILLAIN!
YOU MAY EVEN HAVE KILLED HER!
YUP.
IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT TO SAY?!
YOU PUTTIN' ME ON TRIAL, GIRL?
I WANT AN ANSWER!
WHAT I DID, HAD TO BE DONE, PUN'KIN.
DON'T YOU EVER CALL ME THAT AGAIN!
THAT'S THE NICKNAME A FRIEND USES.
I DON'T THINK YOU QUALIFY ANYMORE.
SHE GAVE ME NO CHOICE.
YOU ARE AS QUICK AS YOUR NAMESAKE, WOLVERINE. YOUR BONES ARE UNBREAKABLE.
AS A WARRIOR YOU HAVE NO PEER. YET YOUR ONLY RECOURSE AGAINST RACHEL...
... WAS LETHAL FORCE-- YOUR CLAWS?
IF I HAD ANOTHER OPTION, NIGHT-CRAWLER...
SNIKT
...DON'T YOU FIGURE I'D HAVE USED IT?
THERE HAD TO BE A WAY, YOU'RE ALWAYS TELLING ME THAT.
NOT THIS TIME.
SHE WAS TOO POWERFUL, TOO OBSESSED...
...AN' I... WAS TOO WEAK.
RAY WAS GOING TO KILL THE BLACK QUEEN. I COULDN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

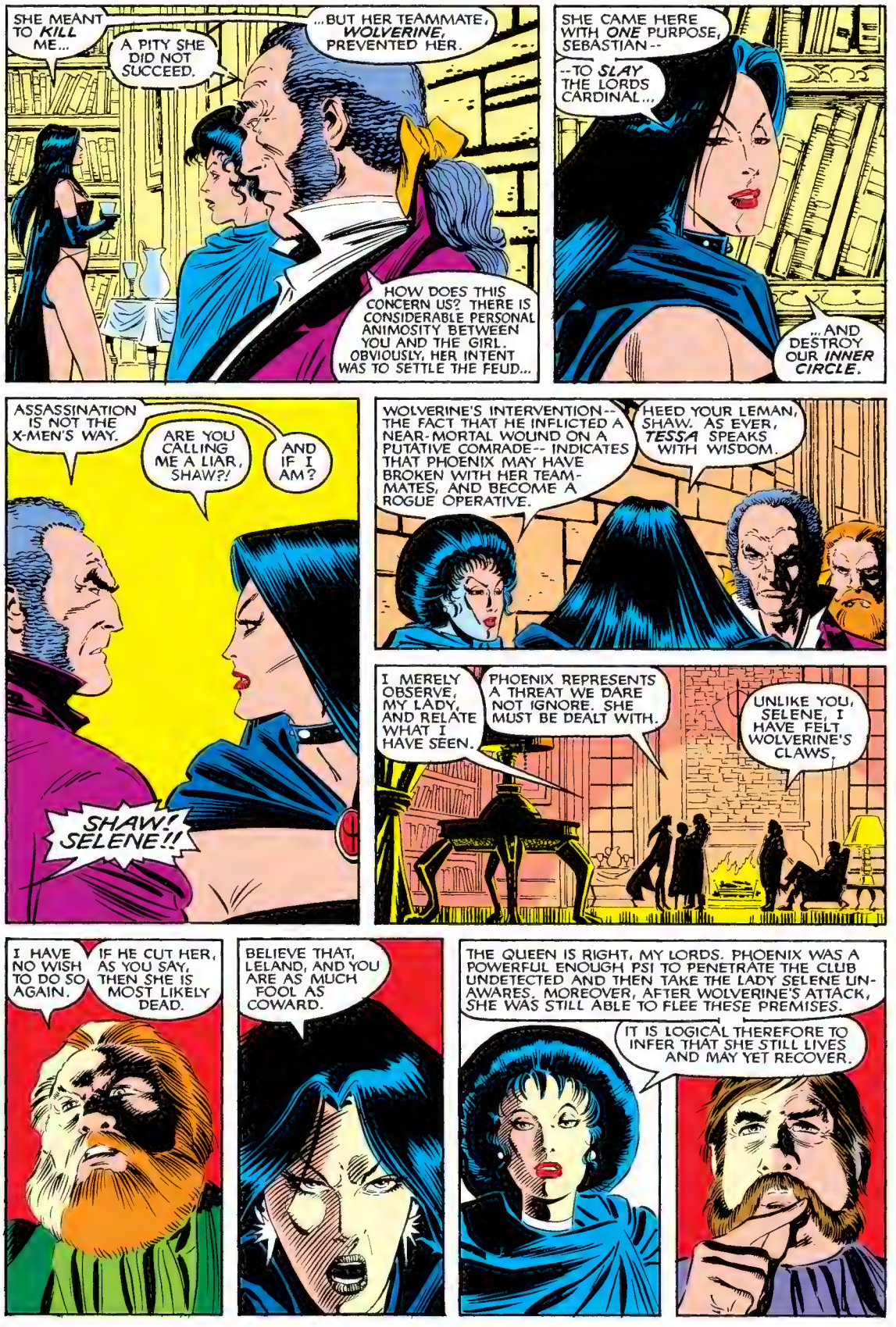

YOU'RE CRAZY!
SELENE'S A VAMPIRE-- AS EVIL A CREATURE AS THEY COME-- ARE YOU SAYING HER ROTTEN LIFE IS WORTH MORE THAN AN X-MAN'S?!
WE'RE NOT TALKIN' A FAIR FIGHT BETWEEN 'EM, NOT EVEN CLOSE.
RAY WENT INTO THE HELLFIRE CLUB WITH ONE GOAL, TO EXECUTE ANY OF THE INNER CIRCLE SHE FOUND THERE.
YOU APPROVE, SHADOWCAT? IS THAT WHAT THE X-MEN HAVE BECOME:
...MURDERERS?
LIKE IT OR NOT, GIRL, WE'RE HEROES. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO STAND FOR SOMETHING. IF WE BREAK THE RULES-- OR THROW 'EM AWAY-- WHY SHOULD ANYBODY FOLLOW 'EM?
AND IF WE DO, WE ANSWER TO YOU, huh?!
WHO APPOINTED YOU THE KEEPER OF MY CONSCIENCE, FELLA?!!
ENOUGH, BOTH OF YOU. WHAT IS DONE, IS DONE.
YOU'RE CHIEF OF THE TRIBE, STORM, AS WELL AS OF THE X-MEN. YOU WISH, WE OBEY.
ASK ME, THOUGH, IT'S A WASTED EFFORT. WOLVIE KNOWS HIS BUSINESS AN' HE SAYS HE HIT TRUE, STRUCK DEEP. SMART MONEY BETS YOUR GIRL'S HISTORY.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR DECISION, LOGAN. THAT DOES NOT MEAN I SANCTION IT.
HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO ARGUE THE POINT. RACHEL STILL LIVES. SHE IS HURT, LOST. SHE MUST BE FOUND-- BEFORE SHE CAUSES ANY FURTHER HARM.
CALLISTO, I WOULD APPRECIATE THE MORLOCKS' ASSISTANCE.
"NEVERTHELESS," STORM TELLS HER, "WE SHALL TRY."
THE RAMBLE, IN CENTRAL PARK.
A LOVELY STRETCH OF WOODLAND BY DAY.
SOMETHING ELSE AGAIN AFTER SUNSET.


NO LET ME GO PLEASE NO DON'T HURT ME NO OH NO HELP--!
SHADDUP, LADY!
Y' WANNA KEEP BREATHIN'...
...YOU DO AS YER TOLD!
I GOT'CHER MONEY--
--NOW, YOU AN' ME, WE'RE GONNA HAVE US SOME FU- URRRRGKH?!
TONIGHT, O MAN...
...SELENE DOES YOU THE GREATEST OF HONORS...
...BY TAKING YOUR MISBEGOTTEN LIFE-ESSENCE...
...FOR HER OWN!
BETTER --AHHHH, BETTER.
BUT TO HAVE TO REMEMBER SUCH A CREATURE AS THIS-- SHIMAKH, THE FATES CAN BE CRUEL.

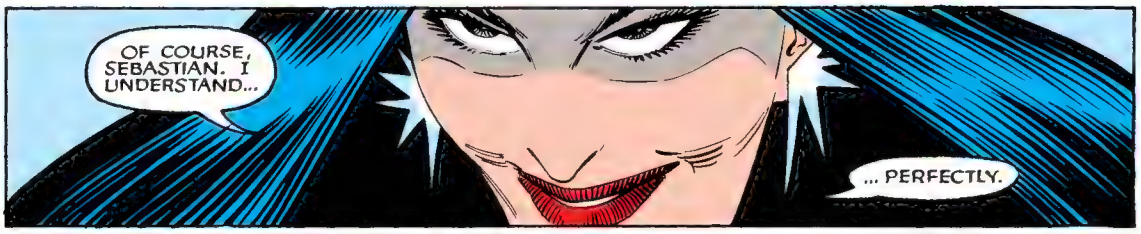

YET SUCH IS THE PRICE DEMANDED FOR MY SURVIVAL...
...THAT I EXPERIENCE THE LIVES OF THOSE I SLAY.
NO MATTER HOW FOUL.
YOU SAVED ME! THANK YOU! TH*
OR INNOCENT.
AAAAAA

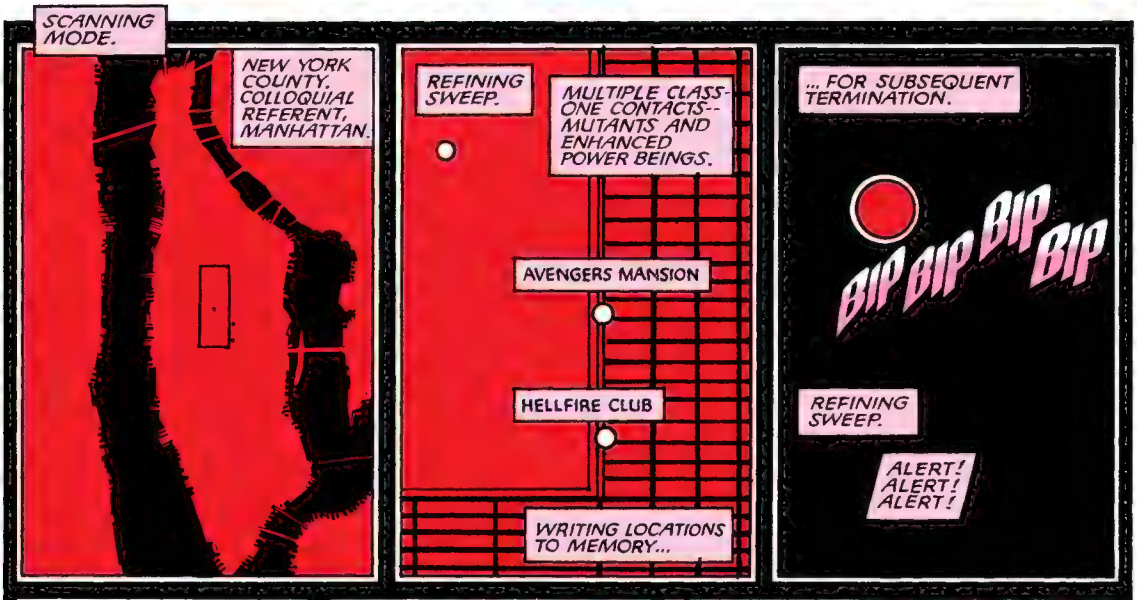

ACROSS FIFTH AVENUE STANDS THE CLASSICALLY IMPOSING TURN OF THE CENTURY MANSION THAT HOUSES THE HELLFIRE CLUB--
--WHICH COUNTS AMONG ITS MEMBERSHIP, THE RICHEST AND MOST POWERFUL TYCOONS ON EARTH.
BEHIND THAT PLUSH FACADE, HOWEVER, IS A SECRET SOCIETY--THE INNER CIRCLE-- WHOSE GOAL IS THE COMPLETE DOMINATION OF THE WORLD.

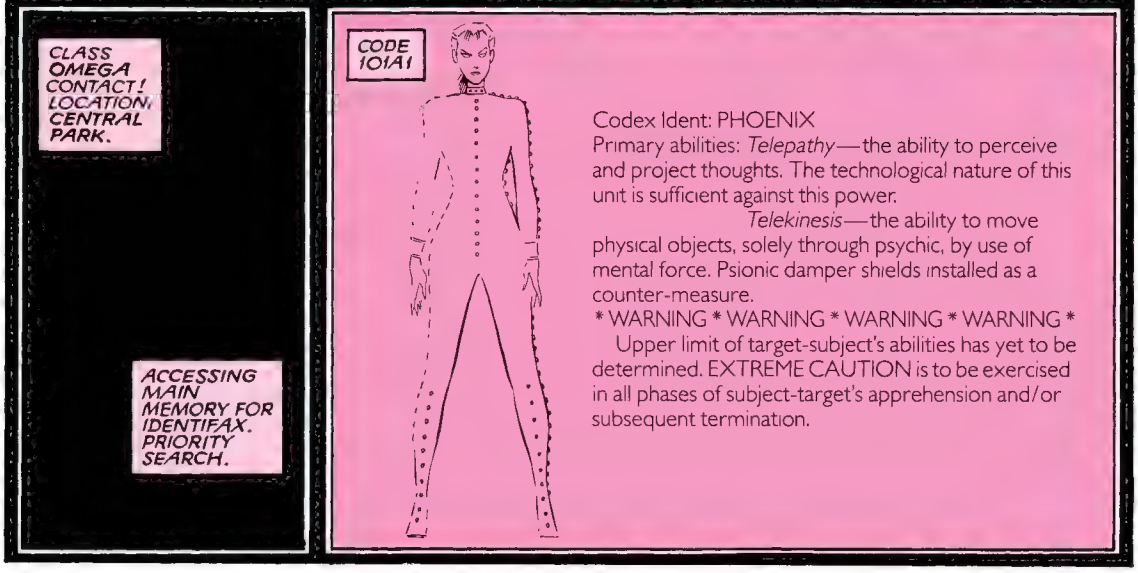

THE LORDS CARDINAL RULE THE CIRCLE. SELENE IS ITS NEWLY ORDAINED BLACK QUEEN.
BLACK KING--AND PRESIDENT OF THE ENTIRE CLUB, IS BILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST SEBASTIAN SHAW. LIKE SELENE, HE IS A MUTANT--AND, IN HIS OWN WAY, AS MERCILESSLY DEADLY A PREDATOR.
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, SELENE.
WHY HAVE YOU SUMMONED US?!
BECAUSE, MY DEAR SEBASTIAN, EARLIER THIS EVENING, THE LORDS CARDINAL WERE ATTACKED...
...BY RACHEL SUMMERS, THE X-MEN'S YOUNG PHOENIX.

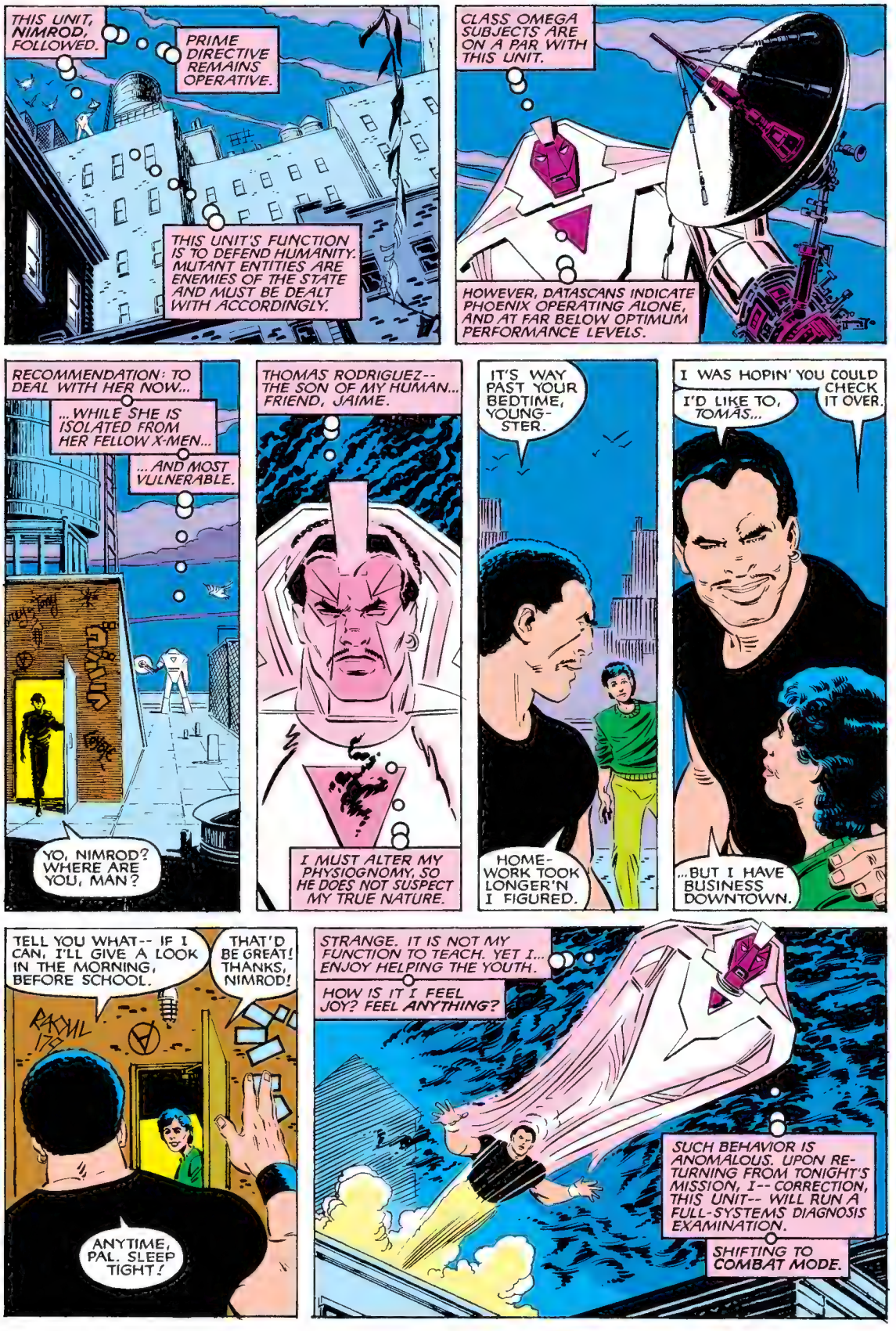

SHE MEANT TO KILL ME...
A PITY SHE DID NOT SUCCEED.
...BUT HER TEAMMATE, WOLVERINE, PREVENTED HER.
HOW DOES THIS CONCERN US? THERE IS CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL ANIMOSITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE GIRL. OBVIOUSLY, HER INTENT WAS TO SETTLE THE FEUD...
SHE CAME HERE WITH ONE PURPOSE, SEBASTIAN--
--TO SLAY THE LORDS CARDINAL...
...AND DESTROY OUR INNER CIRCLE.
ASSASSINATION IS NOT THE X-MEN'S WAY.
ARE YOU CALLING ME A LIAR, SHAW?!
AND IF I AM?
SHAW! SELENE!!
WOLVERINE'S INTERVENTION-- THE FACT THAT HE INFLICTED A NEAR-MORTAL WOUND ON A PUTATIVE COMRADE-- INDICATES THAT PHOENIX MAY HAVE BROKEN WITH HER TEAM-MATES, AND BECOME A ROGUE OPERATIVE.
HEED YOUR LEMAN, SHAW. AS EVER, TESSA SPEAKS WITH WISDOM.
I MERELY OBSERVE, MY LADY, AND RELATE WHAT I HAVE SEEN.
PHOENIX REPRESENTS A THREAT WE DARE NOT IGNORE. SHE MUST BE DEALT WITH.
UNLIKE YOU, SELENE, I HAVE FELT WOLVERINE'S CLAWS.
I HAVE NO WISH TO DO SO AGAIN.
IF HE CUT HER, AS YOU SAY, THEN SHE IS MOST LIKELY DEAD.
BELIEVE THAT, LELAND, AND YOU ARE AS MUCH FOOL AS COWARD.
THE QUEEN IS RIGHT, MY LORDS. PHOENIX WAS A POWERFUL ENOUGH PSI TO PENETRATE THE CLUB UNDETECTED AND THEN TAKE THE LADY SELENE UN-AWARES. MOREOVER, AFTER WOLVERINE'S ATTACK, SHE WAS STILL ABLE TO FLEE THESE PREMISES.
IT IS LOGICAL THEREFORE TO INFER THAT SHE STILL LIVES AND MAY YET RECOVER.

HUNTING PHOENIX WILL PROBABLY BRING US INTO DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE X-MEN.
ARE YOU AFRAID, SHAW? IF SO, PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME FOR A QUEEN TO RULE?
YOU DESIRE MY PLACE, MADAM? THEN, TAKE IT...
...IF YOU CAN.
AS IT HAPPENS, HOWEVER, I AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT THE GIRL. HER INSULT CANNOT BE PARDONED, NOR THE DANGER SHE REPRESENTS IGNORED.
BUT I WANT HER ALIVE, SELENE-- A TOOL WE CAN PERHAPS RESHAPE TO OUR PURPOSES-- IS THAT UNDERSTOOD? ALIVE!


OF COURSE, SEBASTIAN. I UNDERSTAND...
... PERFECTLY.


SCANNING MODE.
NEW YORK COUNTY, COLLOQUIAL REFERENT, MANHATTAN.
REFINING SWEEP.
MULTIPLE CLASS-ONE CONTACTS-- MUTANTS AND ENHANCED POWER BEINGS.
AVENGERS MANSION
HELLFIRE CLUB
WRITING LOCATIONS TO MEMORY...
... FOR SUBSEQUENT TERMINATION.
BIP BIP BIP BIP
REFINING SWEEP.
ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!

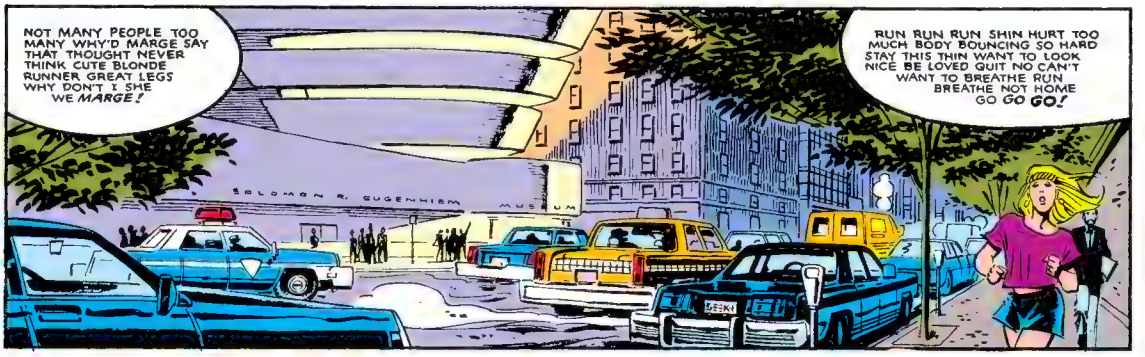

CLASS OMEGA CONTACT! LOCATION: CENTRAL PARK.
ACCESSING MAIN MEMORY FOR IDENTIFAX. PRIORITY SEARCH.
CODE 101A1
Codex Ident: PHOENIX
Primary abilities: Telepathy—the ability to perceive and project thoughts. The technological nature of this unit is sufficient against this power.
Telekinesis—the ability to move physical objects, solely through psychic, by use of mental force. Psionic damper shields installed as a counter-measure.
* WARNING * WARNING * WARNING * WARNING *
Upper limit of target-subject's abilities has yet to be determined. EXTREME CAUTION is to be exercised in all phases of subject-target's apprehension and/or subsequent termination.

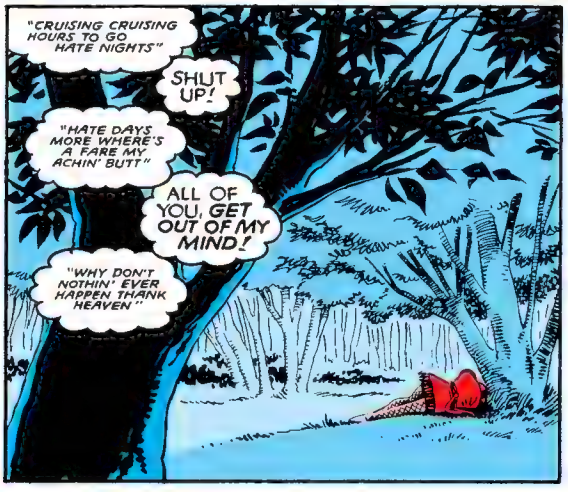

THIS UNIT, NIMROD, FOLLOWED.
PRIME DIRECTIVE REMAINS OPERATIVE.
THIS UNIT'S FUNCTION IS TO DEFEND HUMANITY. MUTANT ENTITIES ARE ENEMIES OF THE STATE AND MUST BE DEALT WITH ACCORDINGLY.
CLASS OMEGA SUBJECTS ARE ON A PAR WITH THIS UNIT.
HOWEVER, DATASCANS INDICATE PHOENIX OPERATING ALONE, AND AT FAR BELOW OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE LEVELS.
RECOMMENDATION: TO DEAL WITH HER NOW...
...WHILE SHE IS ISOLATED FROM HER FELLOW X-MEN...
...AND MOST VULNERABLE.
YO, NIMROD? WHERE ARE YOU, MAN?
THOMAS RODRIGUEZ-- THE SON OF MY HUMAN... FRIEND, JAIME.
I MUST ALTER MY PHYSIOGNOMY, SO HE DOES NOT SUSPECT MY TRUE NATURE.
IT'S WAY PAST YOUR BEDTIME, YOUNG-STER.
HOME-WORK TOOK LONGER'N I FIGURED.
I WAS HOPIN' YOU COULD CHECK IT OVER.
I'D LIKE TO, TOMÁS...
...BUT I HAVE BUSINESS DOWNTOWN.
TELL YOU WHAT-- IF I CAN, I'LL GIVE A LOOK IN THE MORNING, BEFORE SCHOOL.
THAT'D BE GREAT! THANKS, NIMROD!
ANYTIME, PAL. SLEEP TIGHT!
STRANGE. IT IS NOT MY FUNCTION TO TEACH. YET I... ENJOY HELPING THE YOUTH.
HOW IS IT I FEEL JOY? FEEL ANYTHING?
SUCH BEHAVIOR IS ANOMALOUS. UPON RE-TURNING FROM TONIGHT'S MISSION, I-- CORRECTION, THIS UNIT-- WILL RUN A FULL-SYSTEMS DIAGNOSIS EXAMINATION.
SHIFTING TO COMBAT MODE.

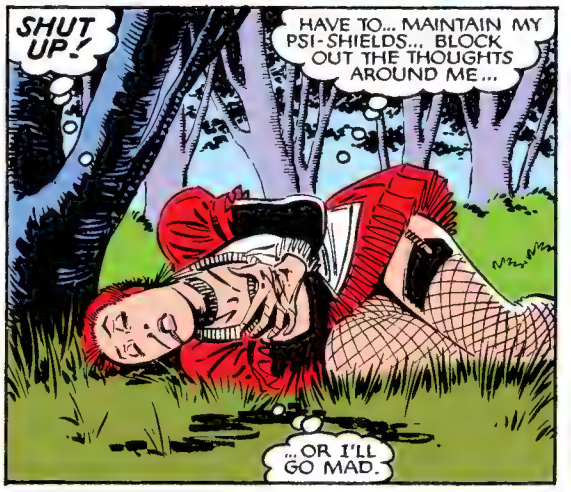
Love
SAD
HATE
FEAR
RAGE
HAPPY
TIRED
HUNGRY
LOST
LONELY
YEARN

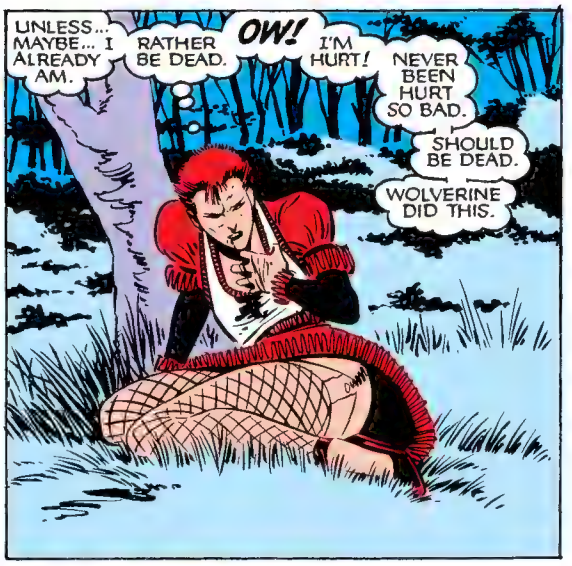
SEARCHING
HUNTING
GOING HOME
FEET HURT
BACK SORE
HEAD ACHES
WHY DON'T MY EYES SEE SO GOOD ANYMORE
SILENCE
LOVE THE MIDNIGHT

WANT TO DANCE
SLEEP
KISS
ROAM
HANDS COLD WARM HEART HEARTH
HATE THESE SHOES
LOOKIN' SO GOOD!

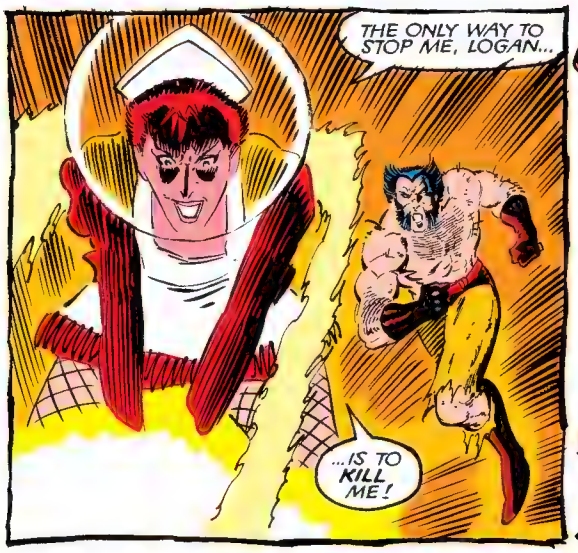

NOT MANY PEOPLE TOO MANY WHY'D MARGE SAY THAT THOUGHT NEVER THINK CUTE BLONDE RUNNER GREAT LEGS WHY DON'T I SHE WE MARGE!
RUN RUN RUN SHIN HURT TOO MUCH BODY BOUNCING SO HARD STAY THIS THIN WANT TO LOOK NICE BE LOVED QUIT NO CAN'T WANT TO BREATHE RUN BREATHE NOT HOME GO GO GO!
SOLOMON R. GUGENHEIM MUSEUM


"CRUISING CRUISING HOURS TO GO HATE NIGHTS"
SHUT UP!
"HATE DAYS MORE WHERE'S A FARE MY ACHIN' BUTT"
ALL OF YOU, GET OUT OF MY MIND!
"WHY DON'T NOTHIN' EVER HAPPEN THANK HEAVEN"

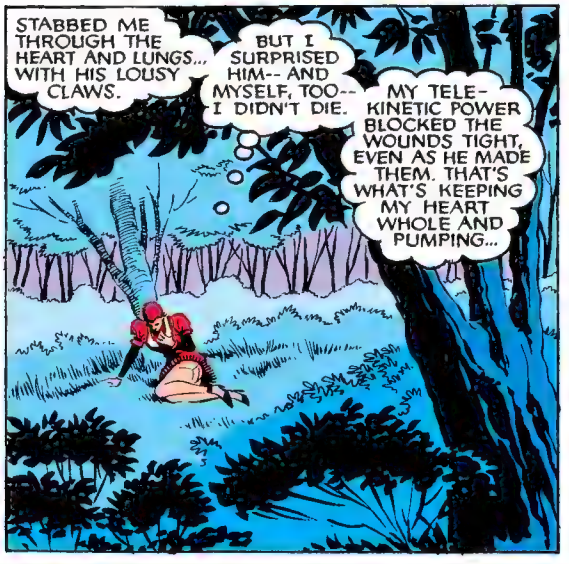

SHUT UP!
HAVE TO... MAINTAIN MY PSI-SHIELDS... BLOCK OUT THE THOUGHTS AROUND ME...
...OR I'LL GO MAD.

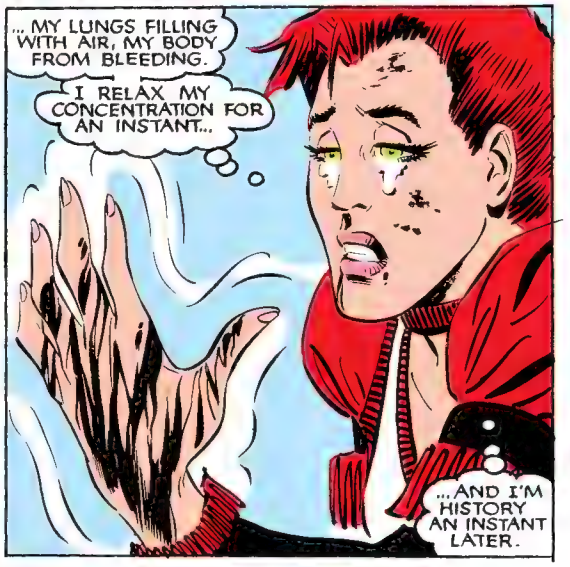

UNLESS... MAYBE... I ALREADY AM.
RATHER BE DEAD.
OW!
I'M HURT!
NEVER BEEN HURT SO BAD.
SHOULD BE DEAD.
WOLVERINE DID THIS.

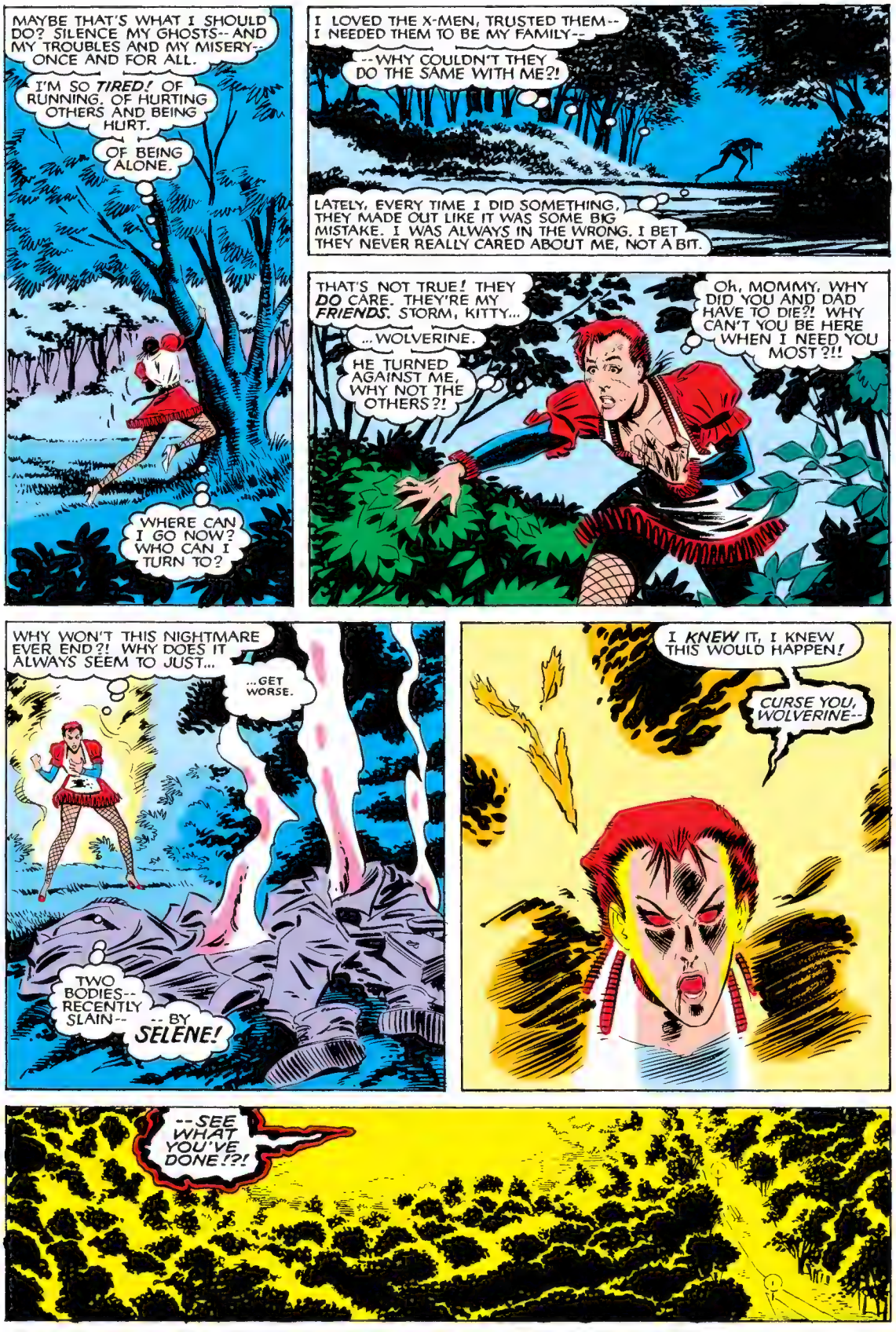
"I HAD SELENE AT MY MERCY. HE SAID X-MEN DON'T COMMIT MURDER.
"BUT SHE DESERVED DEATH!
"THAT DIDN'T MATTER TO HIM.

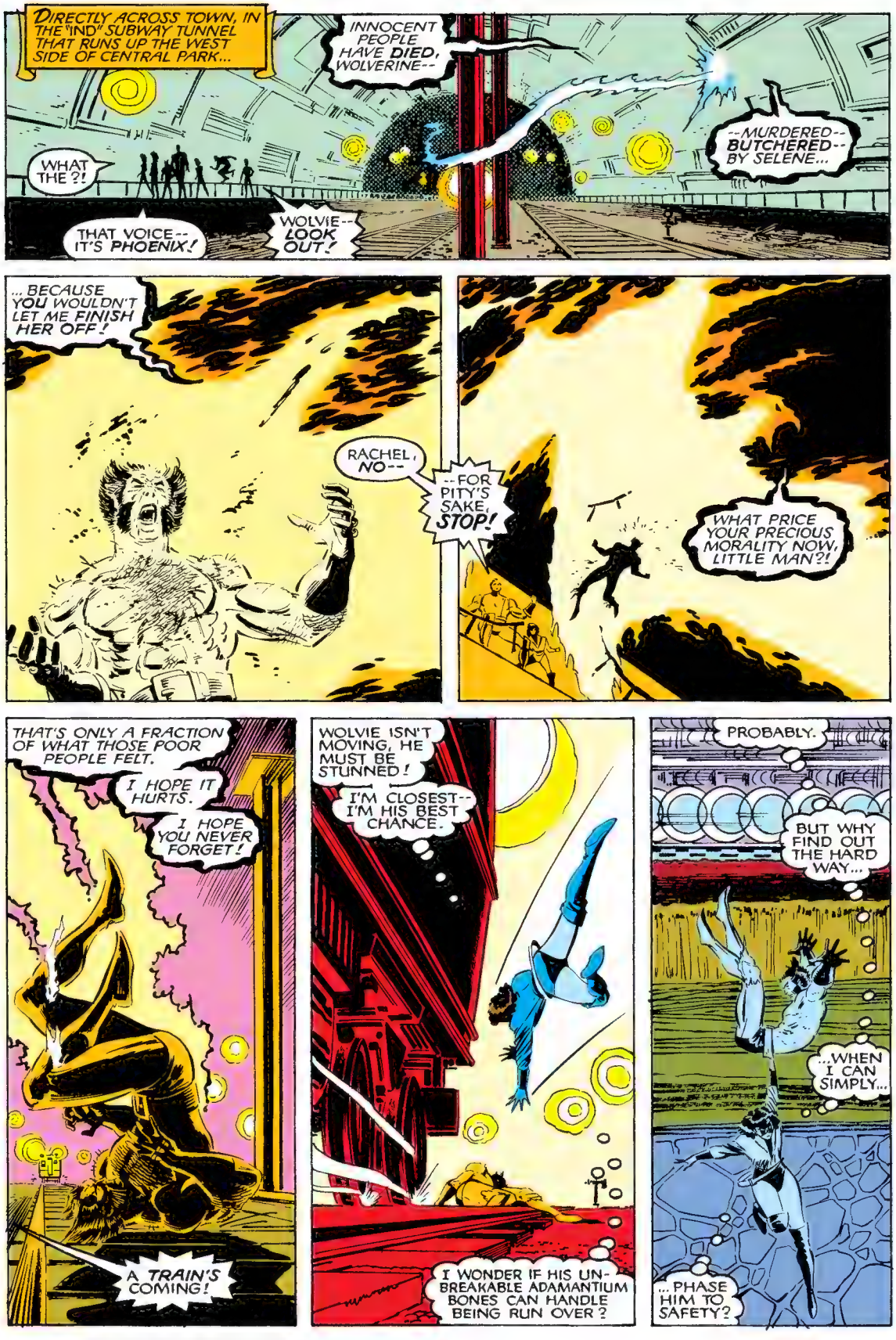

THE ONLY WAY TO STOP ME, LOGAN...
...IS TO KILL ME!

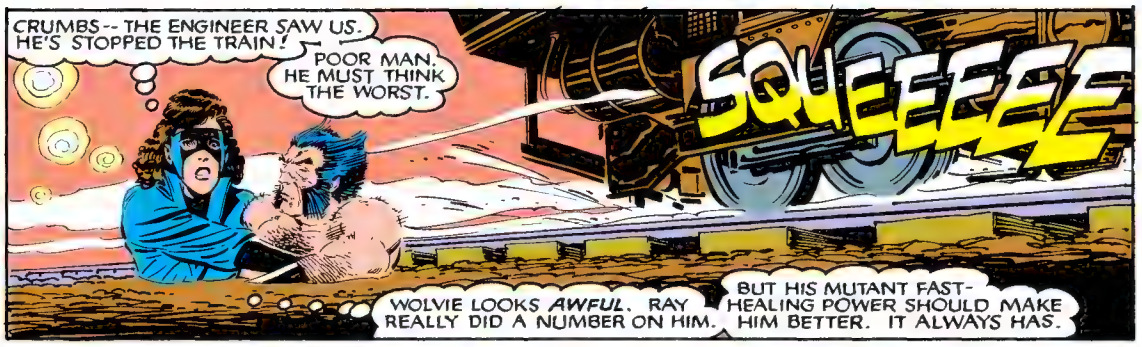
SNIKT
"SO HE DID.

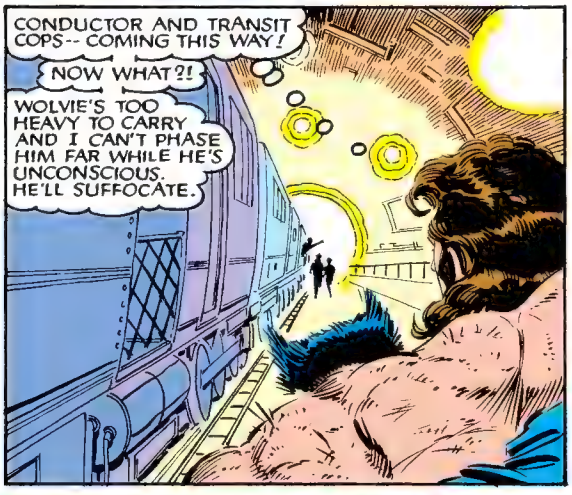

STABBED ME THROUGH THE HEART AND LUNGS... WITH HIS LOUSY CLAWS.
BUT I SURPRISED HIM-- AND MYSELF, TOO-- I DIDN'T DIE.
MY TELE-KINETIC POWER BLOCKED THE WOUNDS TIGHT, EVEN AS HE MADE THEM. THAT'S WHAT'S KEEPING MY HEART WHOLE AND PUMPING...

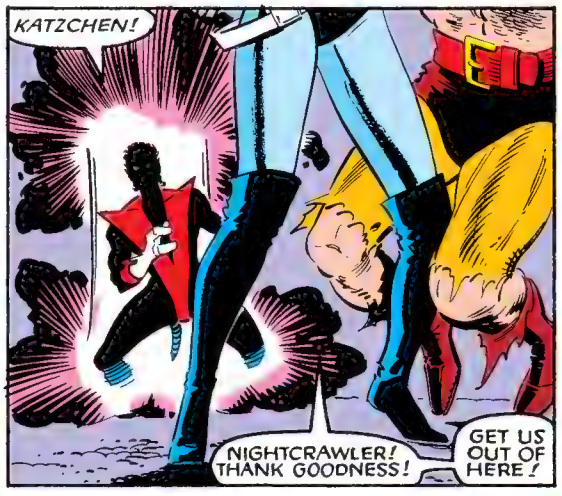

... MY LUNGS FILLING WITH AIR, MY BODY FROM BLEEDING.
I RELAX MY CONCENTRATION FOR AN INSTANT...
...AND I'M HISTORY AN INSTANT LATER.


MAYBE THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD DO? SILENCE MY GHOSTS--AND MY TROUBLES AND MY MISERY--ONCE AND FOR ALL.
I'M SO TIRED! OF RUNNING. OF HURTING OTHERS AND BEING HURT.
OF BEING ALONE.
WHERE CAN I GO NOW? WHO CAN I TURN TO?
I LOVED THE X-MEN, TRUSTED THEM--I NEEDED THEM TO BE MY FAMILY--
--WHY COULDN'T THEY DO THE SAME WITH ME?!
LATELY, EVERY TIME I DID SOMETHING, THEY MADE OUT LIKE IT WAS SOME BIG MISTAKE. I WAS ALWAYS IN THE WRONG. I BET THEY NEVER REALLY CARED ABOUT ME, NOT A BIT.
THAT'S NOT TRUE! THEY DO CARE. THEY'RE MY FRIENDS. STORM, KITTY...
...WOLVERINE.
HE TURNED AGAINST ME, WHY NOT THE OTHERS?!
Oh, MOMMY, WHY DID YOU AND DAD HAVE TO DIE?! WHY CAN'T YOU BE HERE WHEN I NEED YOU MOST?!!
WHY WON'T THIS NIGHTMARE EVER END?! WHY DOES IT ALWAYS SEEM TO JUST...
...GET WORSE.
TWO BODIES--RECENTLY SLAIN--
--BY SELENE!
I KNEW IT, I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
CURSE YOU, WOLVERINE--
--SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!?!

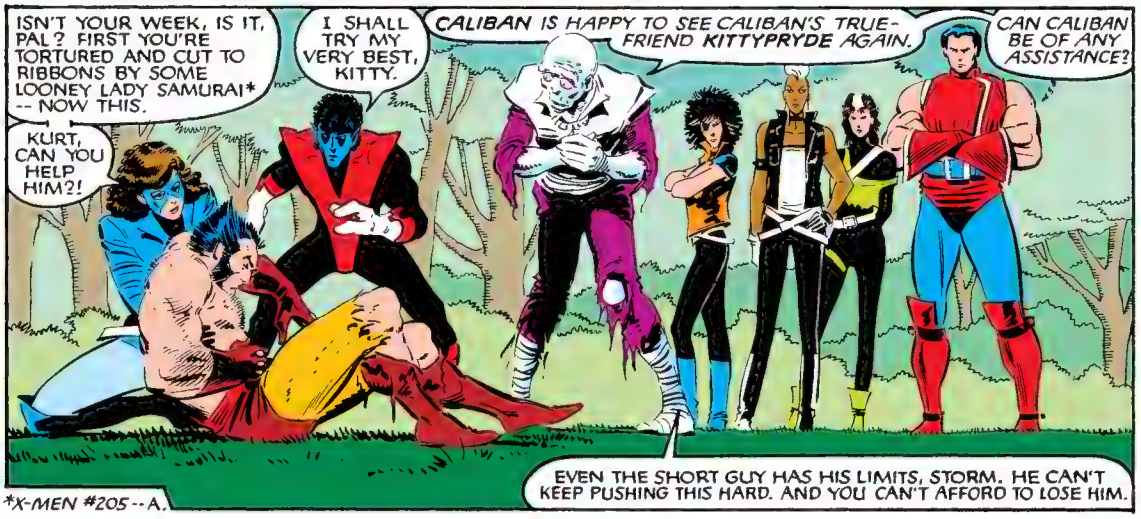

DIRECTLY ACROSS TOWN, IN THE "IND" SUBWAY TUNNEL THAT RUNS UP THE WEST SIDE OF CENTRAL PARK...
INNOCENT PEOPLE HAVE DIED, WOLVERINE--
--MURDERED-- BUTCHERED-- BY SELENE...
WHAT THE?!
THAT VOICE-- IT'S PHOENIX!
WOLVIE-- LOOK OUT!
...BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T LET ME FINISH HER OFF!
RACHEL, NO--
--FOR PITY'S SAKE, STOP!
WHAT PRICE YOUR PRECIOUS MORALITY NOW, LITTLE MAN?!
THAT'S ONLY A FRACTION OF WHAT THOSE POOR PEOPLE FELT.
I HOPE IT HURTS.
I HOPE YOU NEVER FORGET!
A TRAIN'S COMING!
WOLVIE ISN'T MOVING, HE MUST BE STUNNED!
I'M CLOSEST-- I'M HIS BEST CHANCE.
I WONDER IF HIS UN-BREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM BONES CAN HANDLE BEING RUN OVER?
PROBABLY.
BUT WHY FIND OUT THE HARD WAY...
...WHEN I CAN SIMPLY...
...PHASE HIM TO SAFETY?


CRUMBS-- THE ENGINEER SAW US. HE'S STOPPED THE TRAIN!
POOR MAN. HE MUST THINK THE WORST.
SQUEEEEE
WOLVIE LOOKS AWFUL. RAY REALLY DID A NUMBER ON HIM.
BUT HIS MUTANT FAST-HEALING POWER SHOULD MAKE HIM BETTER. IT ALWAYS HAS.

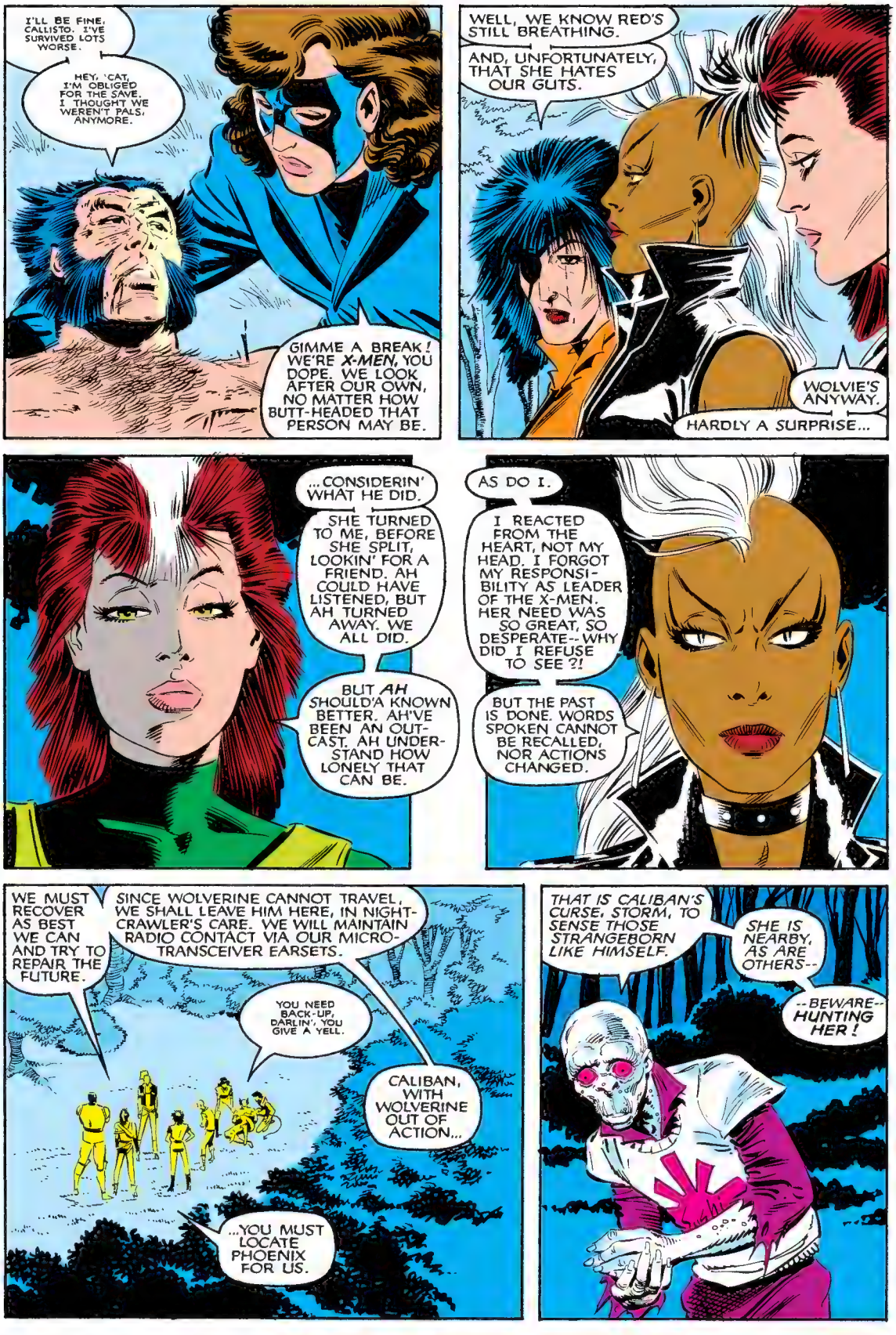

CONDUCTOR AND TRANSIT COPS-- COMING THIS WAY!
NOW WHAT?!
WOLVIE'S TOO HEAVY TO CARRY AND I CAN'T PHASE HIM FAR WHILE HE'S UNCONSCIOUS. HE'LL SUFFOCATE.

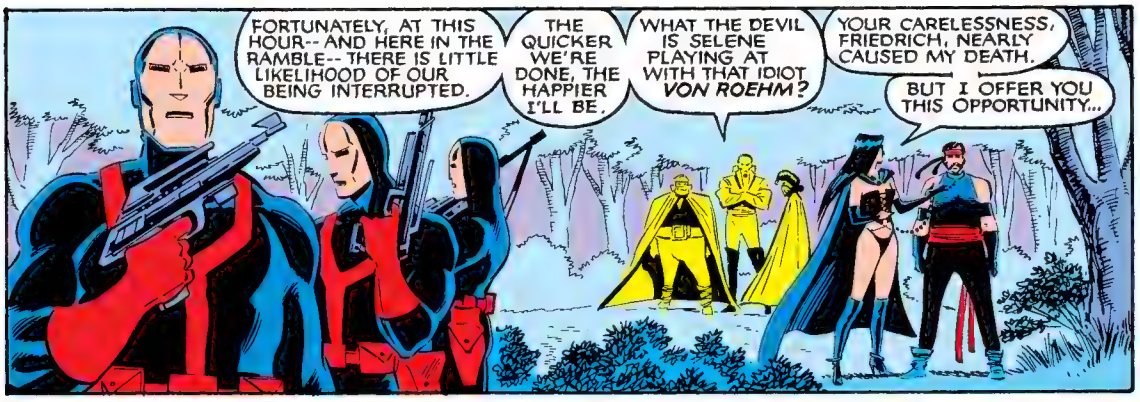

KATZCHEN!
NIGHTCRAWLER! THANK GOODNESS!
GET US OUT OF HERE!

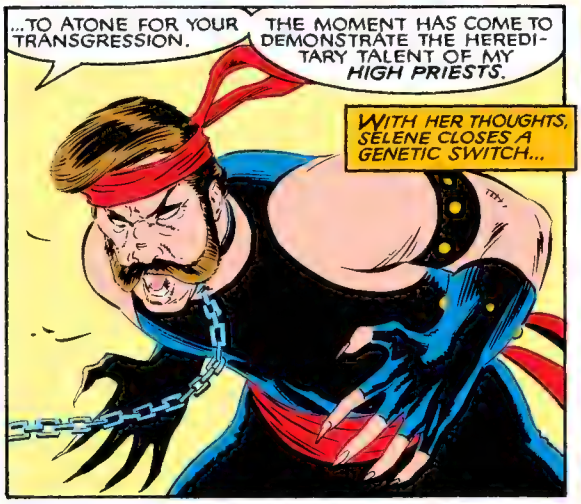
AND, WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC BURST OF FLAME AND BRIMSTONE, KURT WAGNER DOES PRECISELY THAT...
...TELEPORTING SHADOWCAT AND WOLVERINE TO THE JOHN LENNON MEMORIAL GARDEN, STRAWBERRY FIELDS.

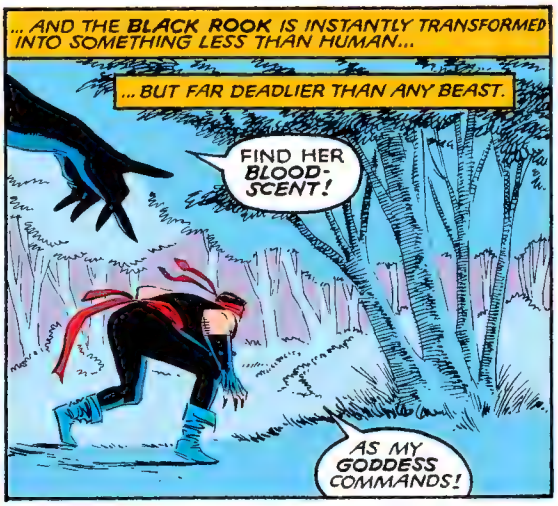

ISN'T YOUR WEEK, IS IT, PAL? FIRST YOU'RE TORTURED AND CUT TO RIBBONS BY SOME LOONEY LADY SAMURAI* -- NOW THIS.
I SHALL TRY MY VERY BEST, KITTY.
CALIBAN IS HAPPY TO SEE CALIBAN'S TRUE-FRIEND KITTYPRYDE AGAIN.
CAN CALIBAN BE OF ANY ASSISTANCE?
KURT, CAN YOU HELP HIM?!
EVEN THE SHORT GUY HAS HIS LIMITS, STORM. HE CAN'T KEEP PUSHING THIS HARD. AND YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE HIM.

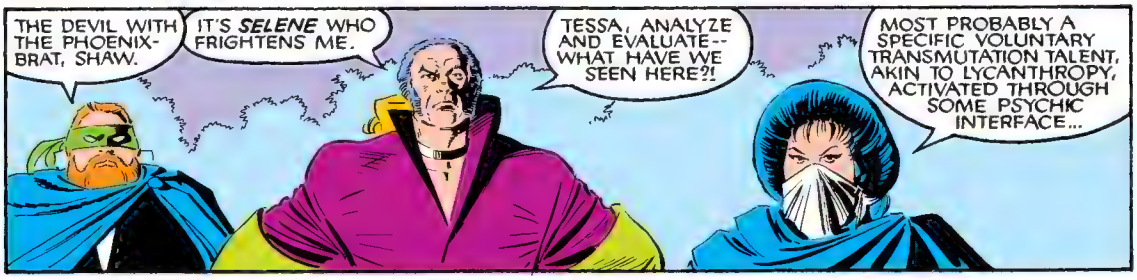
*X-MEN #205 -- A.

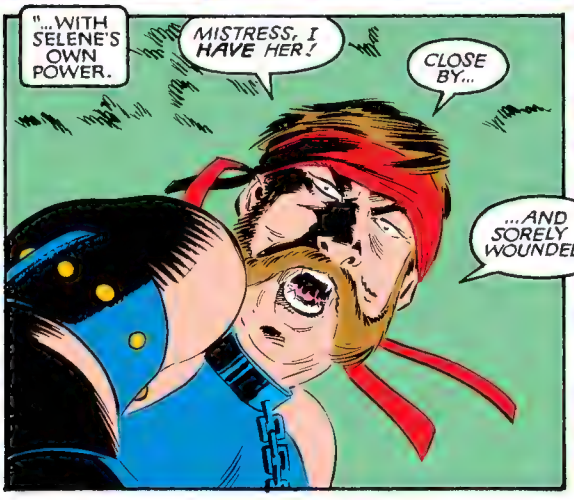

I'LL BE FINE, CALLISTO. I'VE SURVIVED LOTS WORSE.
HEY, 'CAT, I'M OBLIGED FOR THE SAVE, I THOUGHT WE WEREN'T PALS, ANYMORE.
GIMME A BREAK! WE'RE X-MEN, YOU DOPE. WE LOOK AFTER OUR OWN, NO MATTER HOW BUTT-HEADED THAT PERSON MAY BE.
WELL, WE KNOW RED'S STILL BREATHING.
AND, UNFORTUNATELY, THAT SHE HATES OUR GUTS.
WOLVIE'S ANYWAY.
HARDLY A SURPRISE...
...CONSIDERIN' WHAT HE DID.
SHE TURNED TO ME, BEFORE SHE SPLIT, LOOKIN' FOR A FRIEND. AH COULD HAVE LISTENED, BUT AH TURNED AWAY. WE ALL DID.
BUT AH SHOULD'A KNOWN BETTER. AH'VE BEEN AN OUT-CAST. AH UNDER-STAND HOW LONELY THAT CAN BE.
AS DO I.
I REACTED FROM THE HEART, NOT MY HEAD. I FORGOT MY RESPONSI-BILITY AS LEADER OF THE X-MEN. HER NEED WAS SO GREAT, SO DESPERATE--WHY DID I REFUSE TO SEE?!
BUT THE PAST IS DONE. WORDS SPOKEN CANNOT BE RECALLED, NOR ACTIONS CHANGED.
WE MUST RECOVER AS BEST WE CAN AND TRY TO REPAIR THE FUTURE.
SINCE WOLVERINE CANNOT TRAVEL, WE SHALL LEAVE HIM HERE, IN NIGHT-CRAWLER'S CARE. WE WILL MAINTAIN RADIO CONTACT VIA OUR MICRO-TRANSCEIVER EARSETS.
YOU NEED BACK-UP, DARLIN', YOU GIVE A YELL.
CALIBAN, WITH WOLVERINE OUT OF ACTION...
...YOU MUST LOCATE PHOENIX FOR US.
THAT IS CALIBAN'S CURSE, STORM, TO SENSE THOSE STRANGEBORN LIKE HIMSELF.
SHE IS NEARBY, AS ARE OTHERS--
--BEWARE-- HUNTING HER!

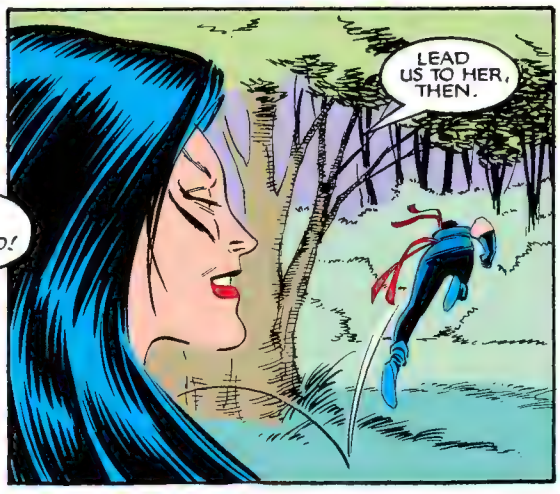

FORTUNATELY, AT THIS HOUR-- AND HERE IN THE RAMBLE-- THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF OUR BEING INTERRUPTED.
THE QUICKER WE'RE DONE, THE HAPPIER I'LL BE.
WHAT THE DEVIL IS SELENE PLAYING AT WITH THAT IDIOT VON ROEHM?
YOUR CARELESSNESS, FRIEDRICH, NEARLY CAUSED MY DEATH.
BUT I OFFER YOU THIS OPPORTUNITY...

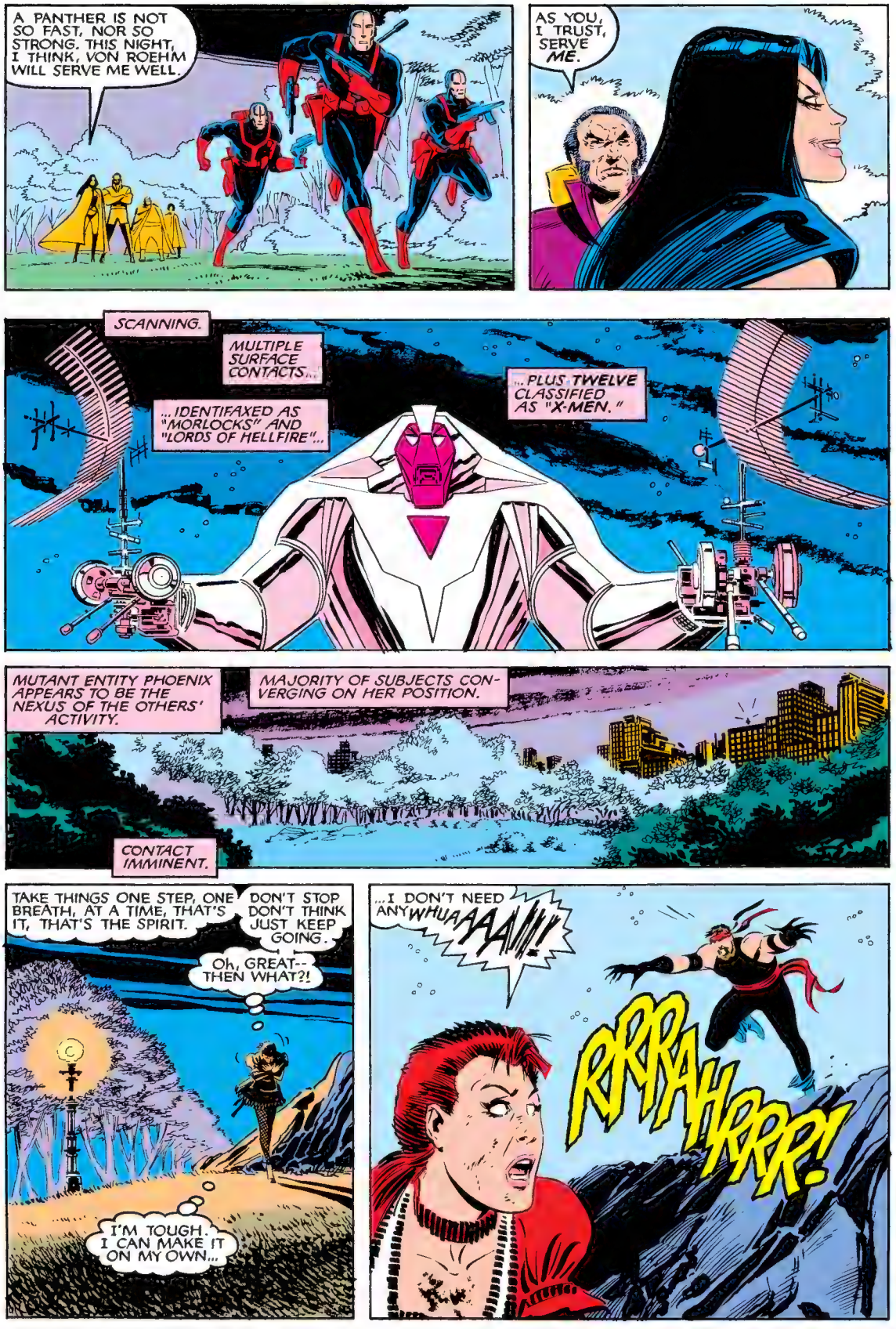

...TO ATONE FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSION.
THE MOMENT HAS COME TO DEMONSTRATE THE HEREDITARY TALENT OF MY HIGH PRIESTS.
WITH HER THOUGHTS, SELENE CLOSES A GENETIC SWITCH...


...AND THE BLACK ROOK IS INSTANTLY TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING LESS THAN HUMAN...
...BUT FAR DEADLIER THAN ANY BEAST.
FIND HER BLOOD-SCENT!
AS MY GODDESS COMMANDS!

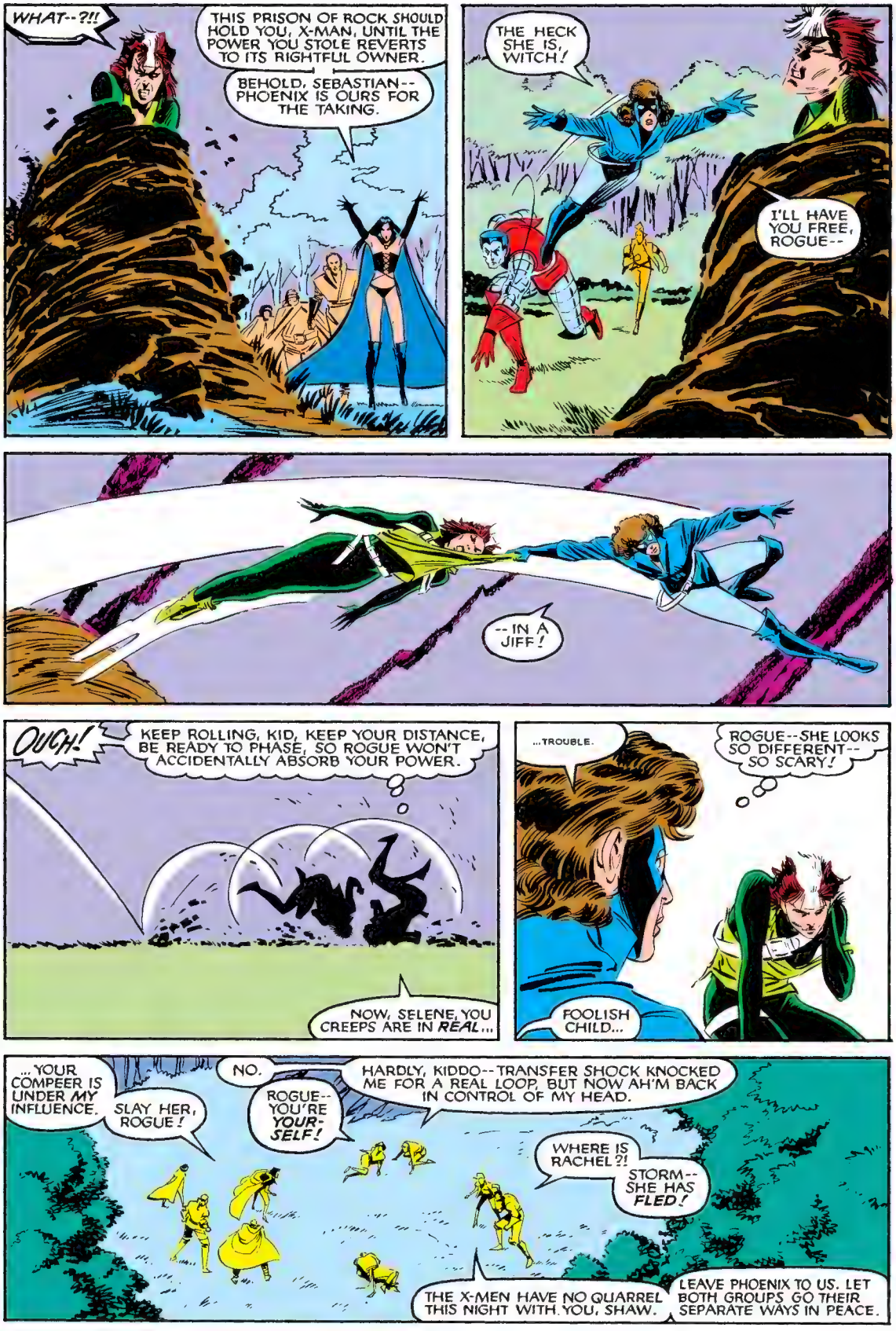

THE DEVIL WITH THE PHOENIX-BRAT, SHAW.
IT'S SELENE WHO FRIGHTENS ME.
TESSA, ANALYZE AND EVALUATE-- WHAT HAVE WE SEEN HERE?!
MOST PROBABLY A SPECIFIC VOLUNTARY TRANSMUTATION TALENT, AKIN TO LYCANTHROPY, ACTIVATED THROUGH SOME PSYCHIC INTERFACE...

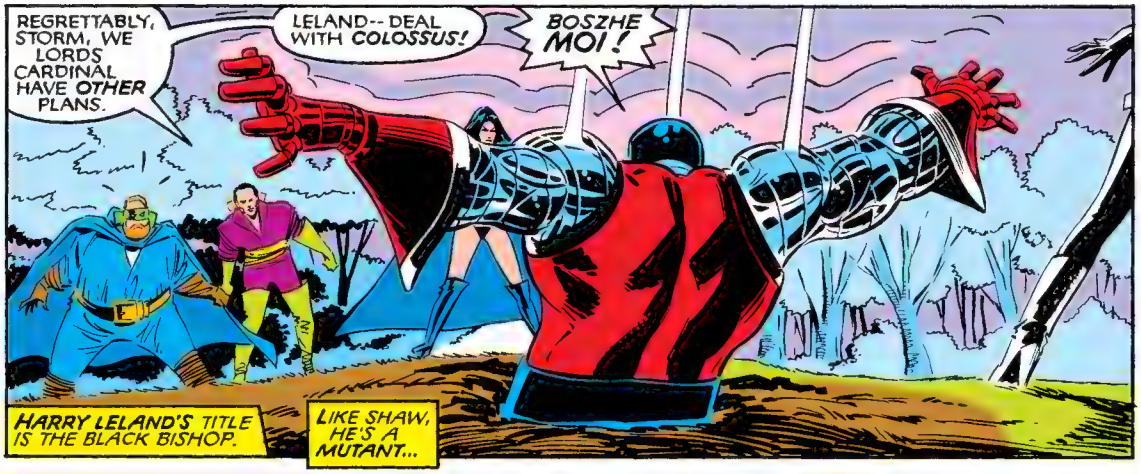

"...WITH SELENE'S OWN POWER.
MISTRESS, I HAVE HER!
CLOSE BY...
...AND SORELY WOUNDED!


LEAD US TO HER, THEN.


A PANTHER IS NOT SO FAST, NOR SO STRONG. THIS NIGHT, I THINK, VON ROEHM WILL SERVE ME WELL.
AS YOU, I TRUST, SERVE ME.
SCANNING.
MULTIPLE SURFACE CONTACTS...
...IDENTIFAXED AS "MORLOCKS" AND "LORDS OF HELLFIRE"...
...PLUS TWELVE CLASSIFIED AS "X-MEN."
MUTANT ENTITY PHOENIX APPEARS TO BE THE NEXUS OF THE OTHERS' ACTIVITY.
MAJORITY OF SUBJECTS CONVERGING ON HER POSITION.
CONTACT IMMINENT.
TAKE THINGS ONE STEP, ONE BREATH, AT A TIME, THAT'S IT, THAT'S THE SPIRIT.
DON'T STOP DON'T THINK JUST KEEP GOING.
Oh, GREAT-- THEN WHAT?!
I'M TOUGH. I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN...
...I DON'T NEED ANYWHUAAAAH!!
RRRAHRRR!

DOWN, BOY-- HEEL!
STAY LOOSE, RAY! YOUR TROUBLES ARE OVER-- ONCE AH RETURN TUBBO TO HIS KENNEL-- AN' THE CAVALRY AIN'T FAR BEHIND!
GLAD TO SEE YOU ON YOUR FEET, RED. YOU HAD US WORRIED.
ROGUE!
"CAVALRY?!" SHE MUST MEAN THE X-MEN.
WHOMP!
BUT-- DO I WANT THEM TO RESCUE ME?!
CLAWS-- TEARIN' AT MY COSTUME!
Oh, NO-- HIS BARE SKIN IS TOUCHIN' MINE!
IMMEDIATELY, ROGUE ABSORBS VON ROEHM'S POWER, HIS MEMORIES...
...THE TOTALITY OF HIS PSYCHE. AND SINCE HE WAS SELENE'S SLAVE, SHE BECOMES THE SAME.
YOUR BLOOD-- YOUR HEART, YOU WRETCHED GIRL-- ARE MINE!
AS SOON, SO SOON, YOUR SOUL WILL BELONG TO MY GODDESS!
ROGUE'S POSSESSED!
AND MY PSIBOLT--
--MY ATTACK ON WOLVERINE LEFT ME TOO DRAINED, TOO WEAK, TO STOP HER!


WHAT--?!!
THIS PRISON OF ROCK SHOULD HOLD YOU, X-MAN, UNTIL THE POWER YOU STOLE REVERTS TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER.
BEHOLD, SEBASTIAN--PHOENIX IS OURS FOR THE TAKING.
THE HECK SHE IS, WITCH!
I'LL HAVE YOU FREE, ROGUE--
--IN A JIFF!
OUCH!
KEEP ROLLING, KID, KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, BE READY TO PHASE, SO ROGUE WON'T ACCIDENTALLY ABSORB YOUR POWER.
NOW, SELENE, YOU CREEPS ARE IN REAL...
...TROUBLE.
ROGUE--SHE LOOKS SO DIFFERENT--SO SCARY!
FOOLISH CHILD...
...YOUR COMPEER IS UNDER MY INFLUENCE.
SLAY HER, ROGUE!
NO.
ROGUE--YOU'RE YOUR-SELF!
HARDLY, KIDDO--TRANSFER SHOCK KNOCKED ME FOR A REAL LOOP, BUT NOW AH'M BACK IN CONTROL OF MY HEAD.
WHERE IS RACHEL?!
STORM--SHE HAS FLED!
THE X-MEN HAVE NO QUARREL THIS NIGHT WITH YOU, SHAW.
LEAVE PHOENIX TO US. LET BOTH GROUPS GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS IN PEACE.

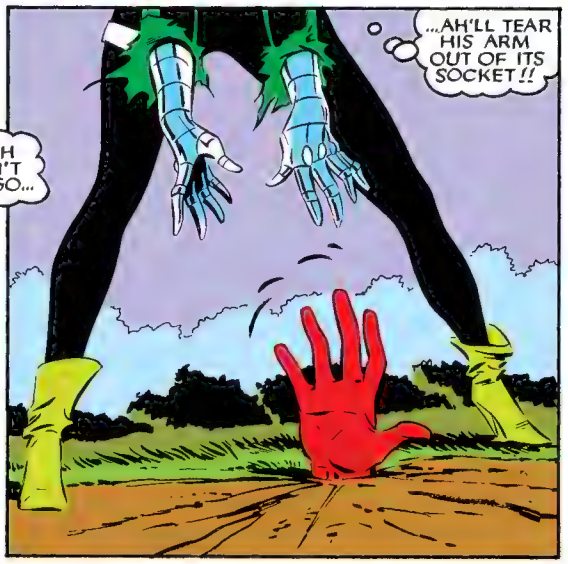

REGRETTABLY, STORM, WE LORDS CARDINAL HAVE OTHER PLANS.
LELAND-- DEAL WITH COLOSSUS!
BOSZHE MOI!
HARRY LELAND'S TITLE IS THE BLACK BISHOP.
LIKE SHAW, HE'S A MUTANT...

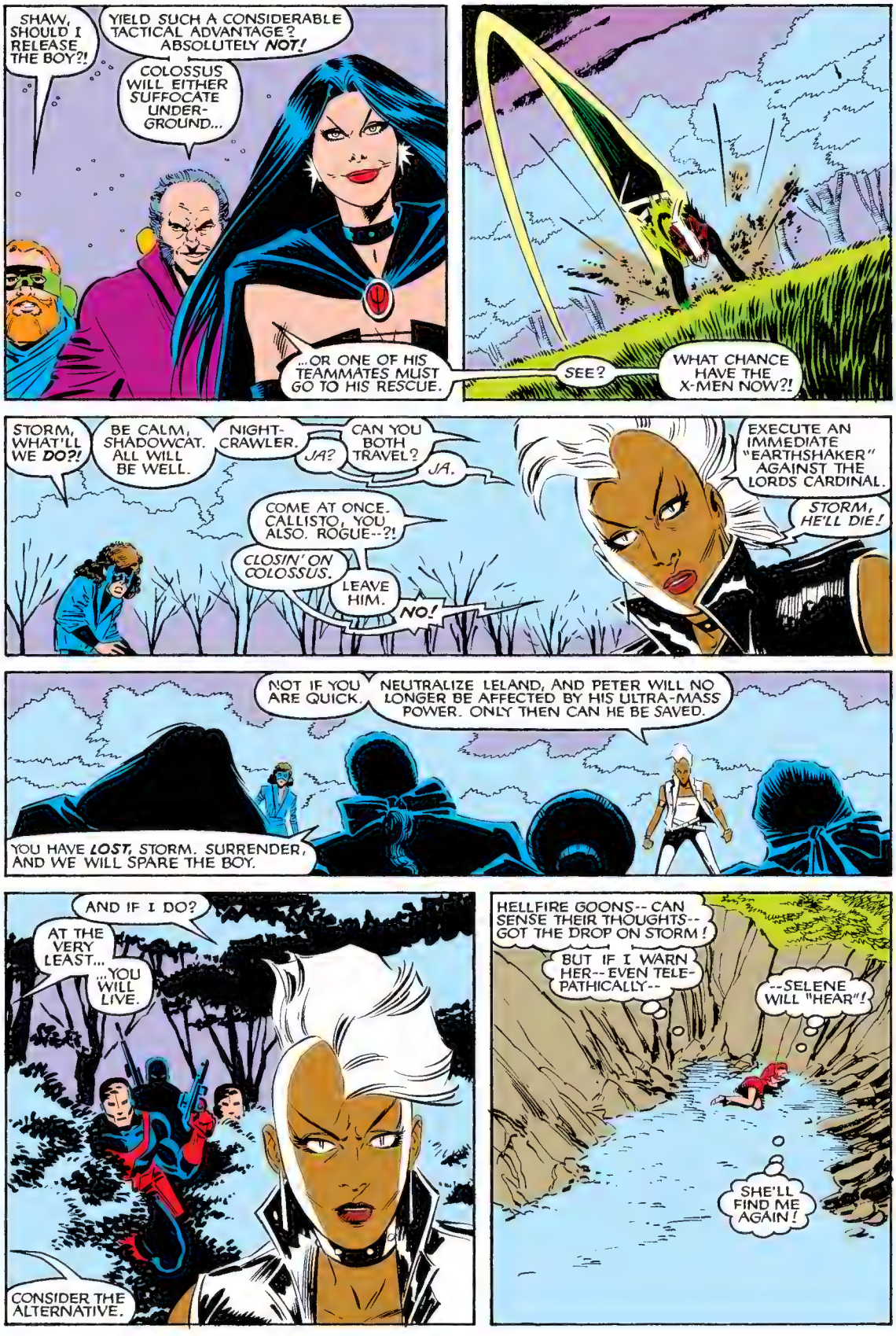
...WITH THE ABILITY TO AFFECT A PERSON-- OR OBJECT'S-- MASS TO A FANTASTIC DEGREE. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, COLOSSUS BECOMES SO DENSE AND MASSIVE...
PETER...!?!
... THAT SOLID GROUND GIVES HIM NO MORE SUPPORT THAN AIR.

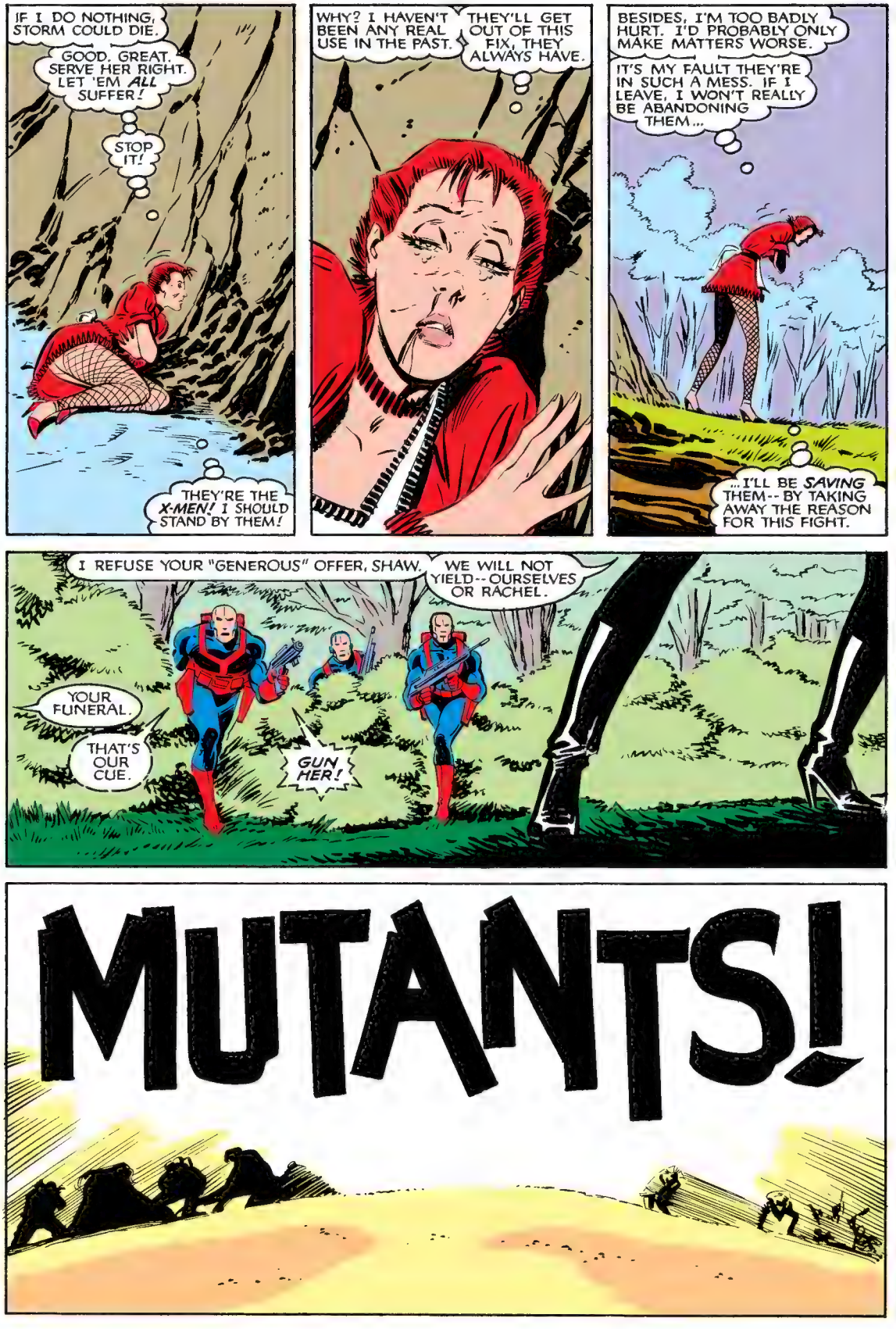
NO, ROGUE-- YOU'LL NOT SAVE HIM!
I POSSESS ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER ANY AND ALL INANIMATE OBJECTS, INCLUDING...

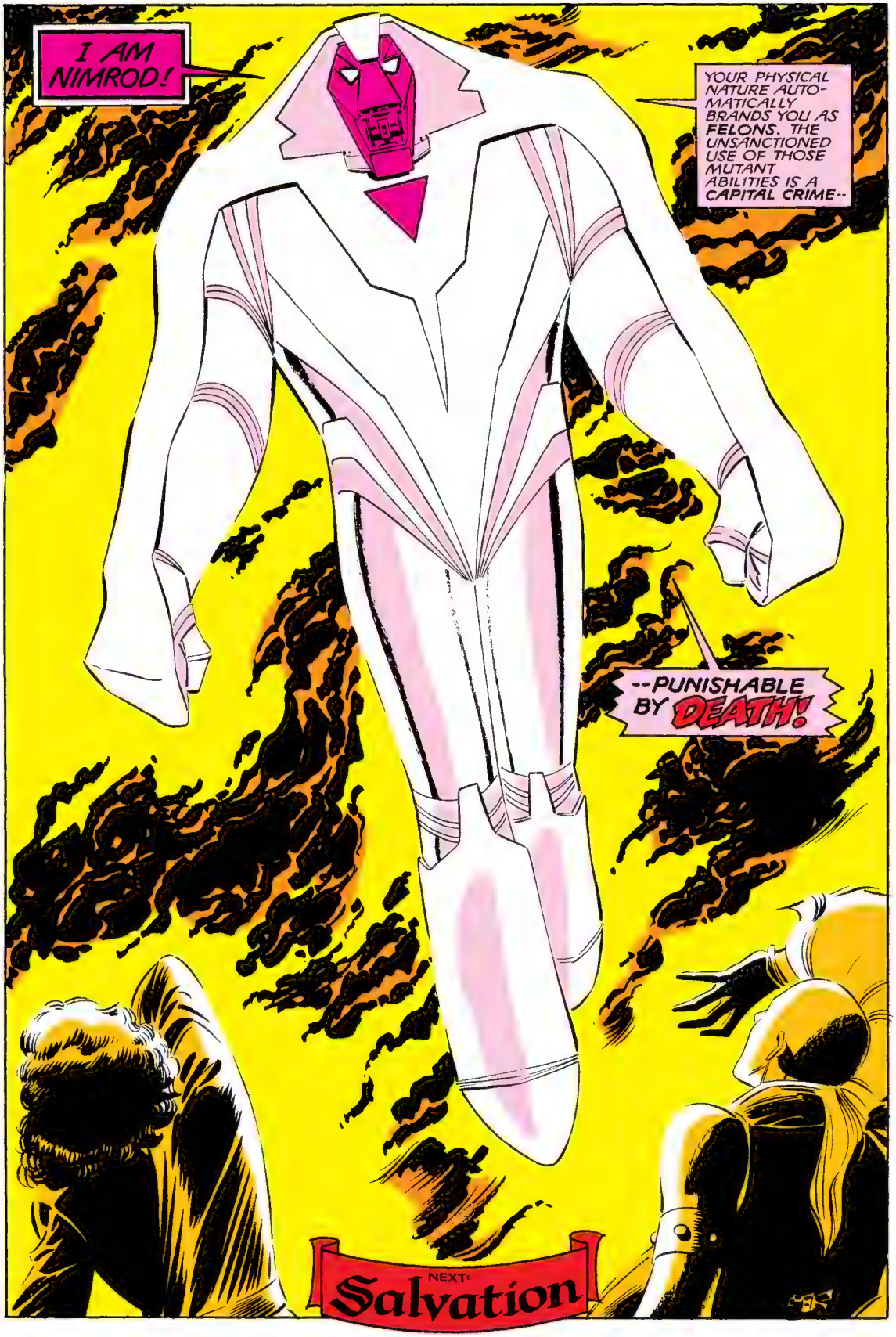
MY GLOVES-- SELENE'S DISINTEGRATING THEM!

AH'M ABSORBING PETER'S POWER! MY BODY'S TURNIN' TO STEEL!
HE'S BECOME HUMAN-- BUT LELAND'S STILL DRAGGIN' HIM DOWN!
IF AH DON'T LET GO...


...AH'LL TEAR HIS ARM OUT OF ITS SOCKET!!


SHAW, SHOULD I RELEASE THE BOY?!
YIELD SUCH A CONSIDERABLE TACTICAL ADVANTAGE?
ABSOLUTELY NOT!
COLOSSUS WILL EITHER SUFFOCATE UNDER-GROUND...
...OR ONE OF HIS TEAMMATES MUST GO TO HIS RESCUE.
SEE?
WHAT CHANCE HAVE THE X-MEN NOW?!
STORM, WHAT'LL WE DO?!
BE CALM, SHADOWCAT. ALL WILL BE WELL.
NIGHT-CRAWLER.
JA?
CAN YOU BOTH TRAVEL?
JA.
EXECUTE AN IMMEDIATE "EARTHSHAKER" AGAINST THE LORDS CARDINAL.
STORM, HE'LL DIE!
COME AT ONCE. CALLISTO, YOU ALSO. ROGUE--?!
CLOSIN' ON COLOSSUS.
LEAVE HIM.
NO!
NOT IF YOU ARE QUICK.
NEUTRALIZE LELAND, AND PETER WILL NO LONGER BE AFFECTED BY HIS ULTRA-MASS POWER. ONLY THEN CAN HE BE SAVED.
YOU HAVE LOST, STORM. SURRENDER, AND WE WILL SPARE THE BOY.
AND IF I DO?
AT THE VERY LEAST...
...YOU WILL LIVE.
CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVE.
HELLFIRE GOONS-- CAN SENSE THEIR THOUGHTS-- GOT THE DROP ON STORM!
BUT IF I WARN HER-- EVEN TELE-PATHICALLY--
--SELENE WILL "HEAR"!
SHE'LL FIND ME AGAIN!


IF I DO NOTHING, STORM COULD DIE.
GOOD. GREAT. SERVE HER RIGHT. LET 'EM ALL SUFFER!
STOP IT!
THEY'RE THE X-MEN! I SHOULD STAND BY THEM!
WHY? I HAVEN'T BEEN ANY REAL USE IN THE PAST.
THEY'LL GET OUT OF THIS FIX, THEY ALWAYS HAVE.
BESIDES, I'M TOO BADLY HURT. I'D PROBABLY ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE.
IT'S MY FAULT THEY'RE IN SUCH A MESS. IF I LEAVE, I WON'T REALLY BE ABANDONING THEM...
...I'LL BE SAVING THEM-- BY TAKING AWAY THE REASON FOR THIS FIGHT.
I REFUSE YOUR "GENEROUS" OFFER, SHAW.
WE WILL NOT YIELD--OURSELVES OR RACHEL.
YOUR FUNERAL.
THAT'S OUR CUE.
GUN HER!
MUTANTS!


I AM NIMROD!
YOUR PHYSICAL NATURE AUTOMATICALLY BRANDS YOU AS FELONS. THE UNSANCTIONED USE OF THOSE MUTANT ABILITIES IS A CAPITAL CRIME--
--PUNISHABLE BY DEATH!
NEXT: Salvation

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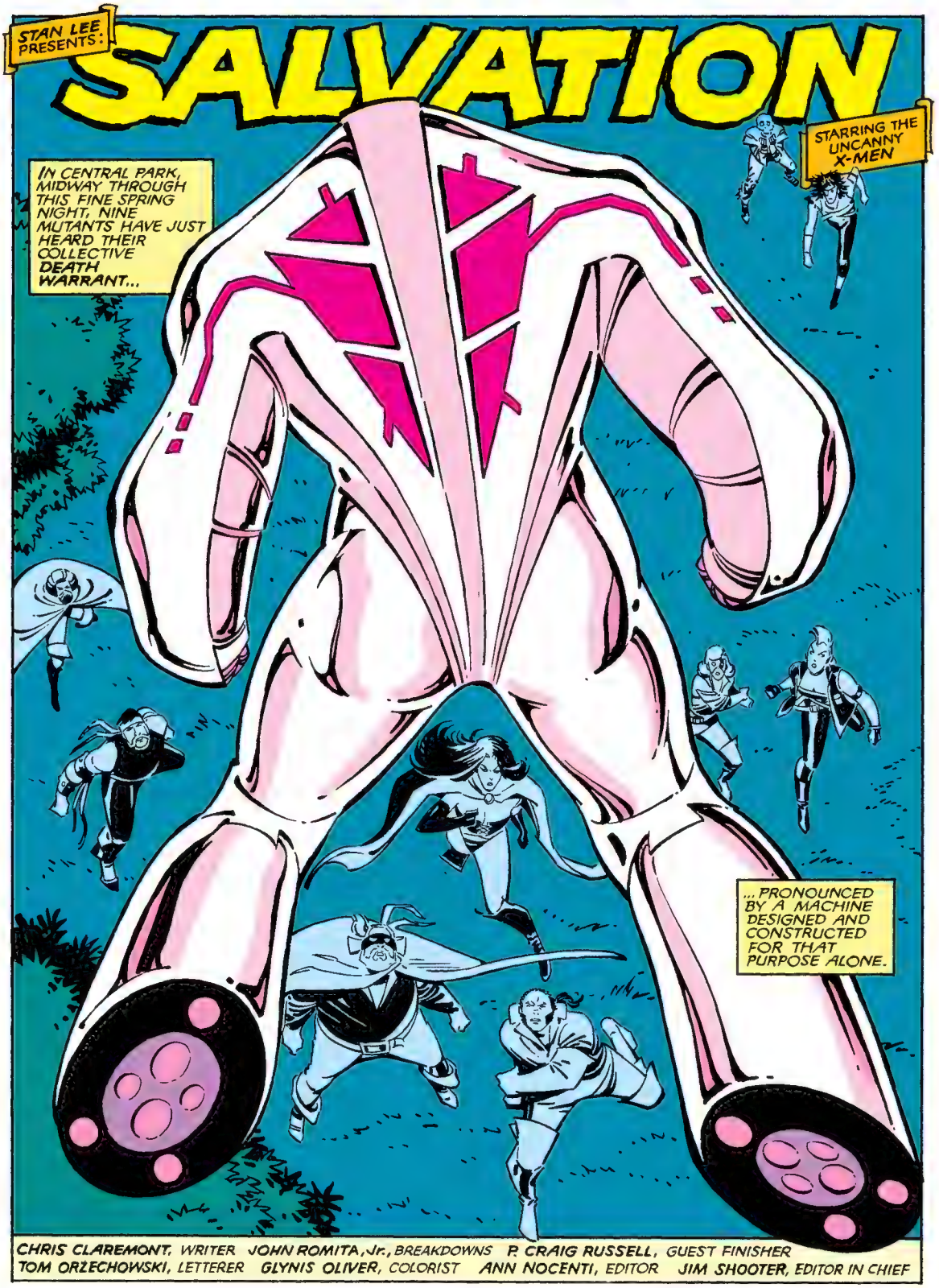
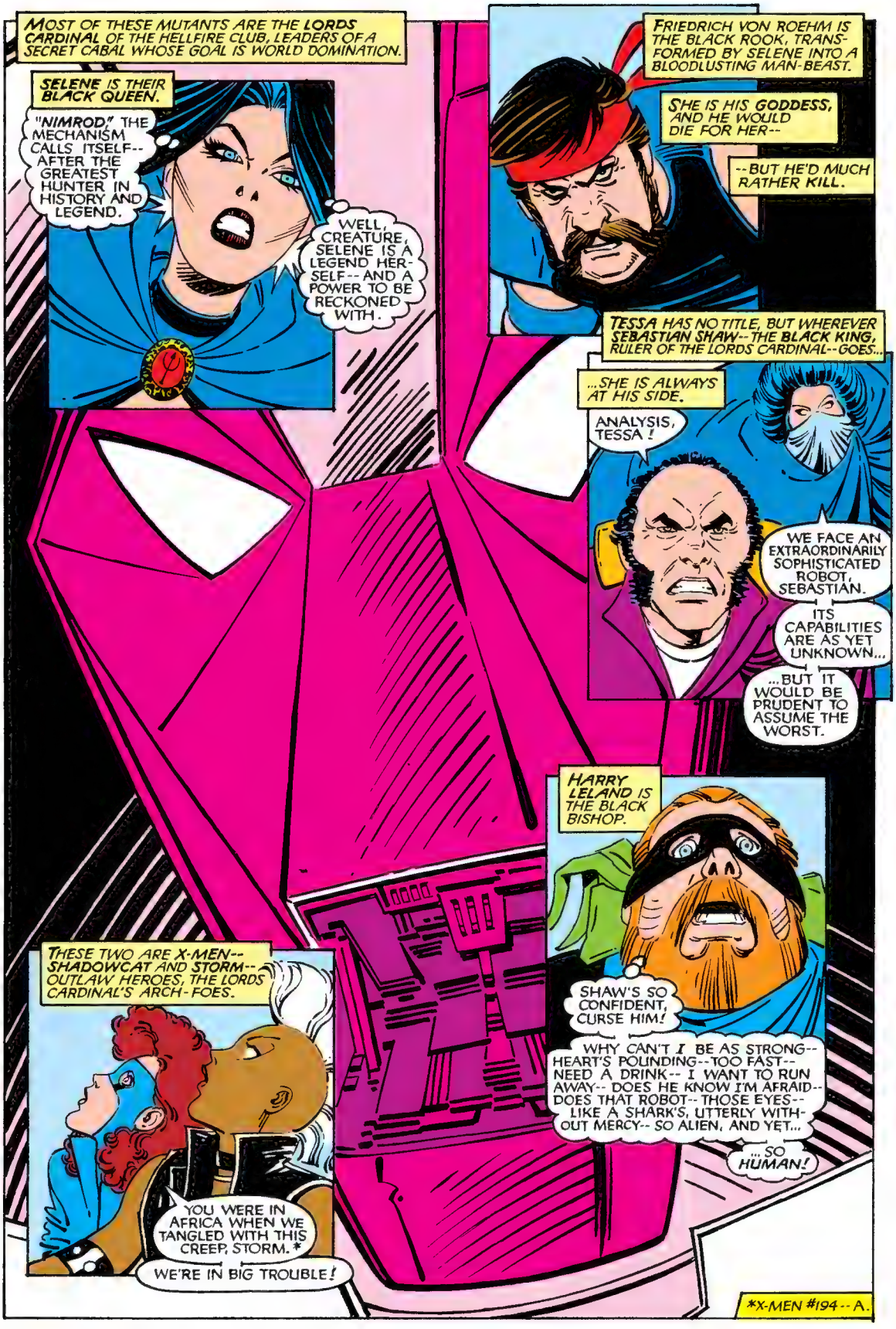
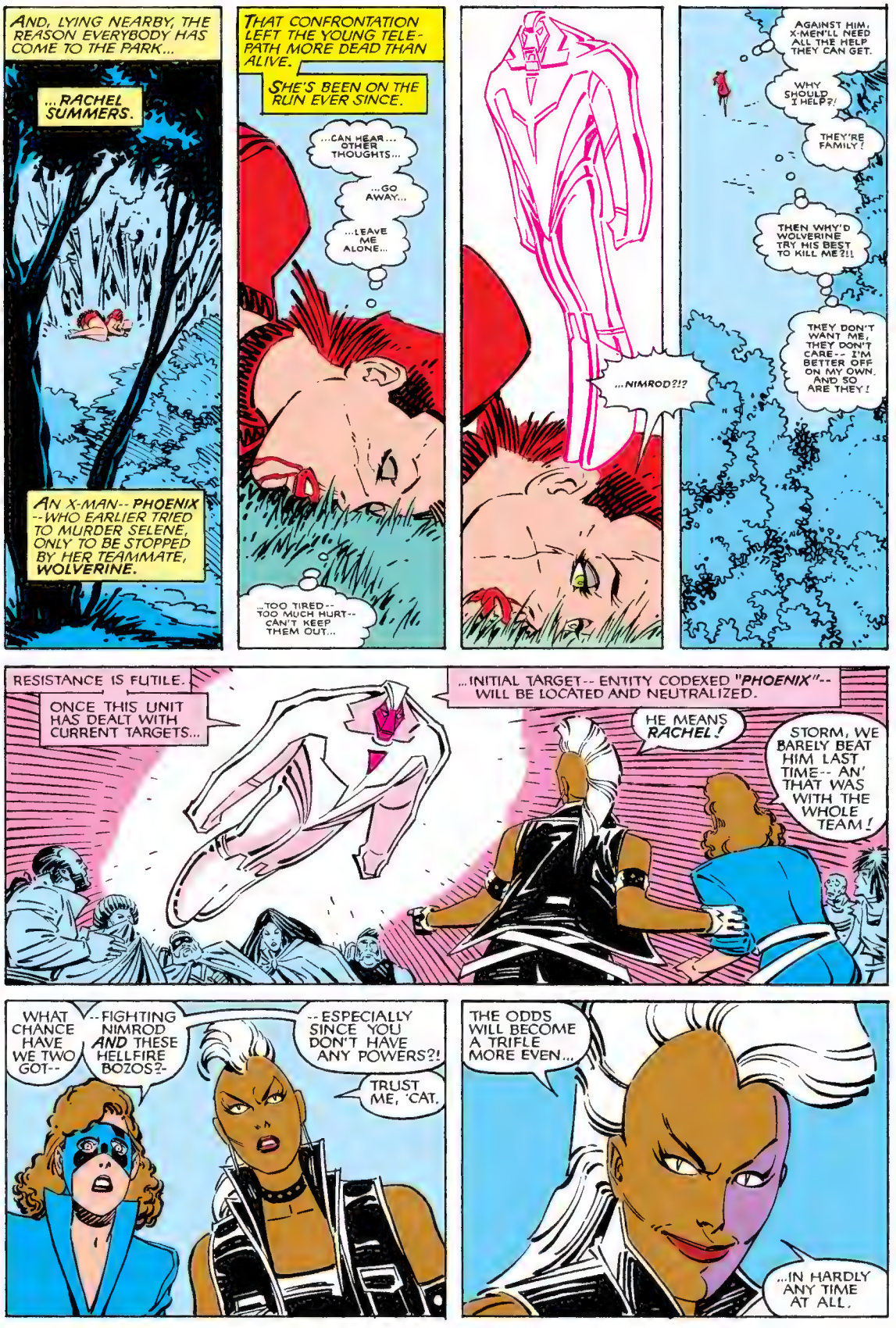
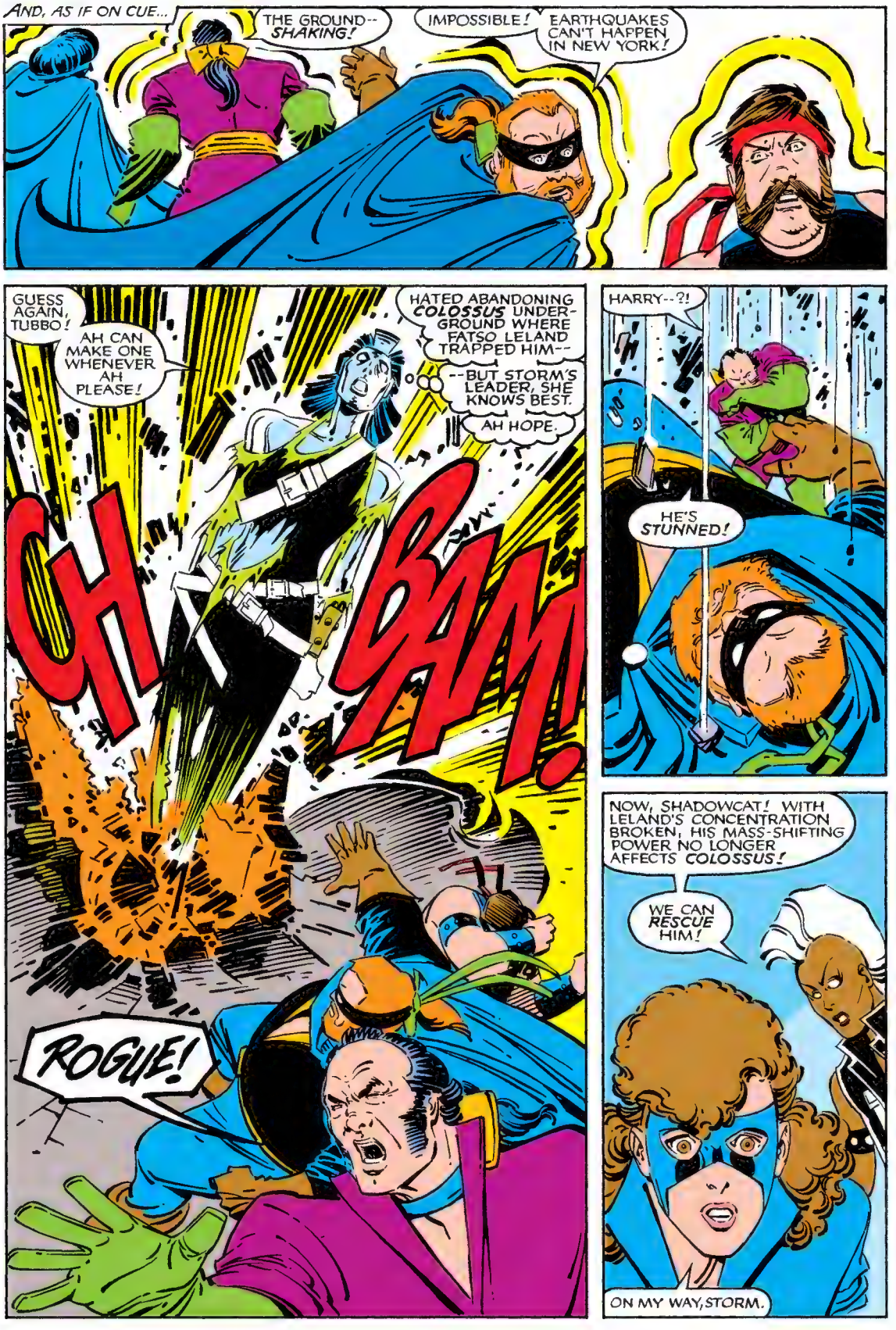
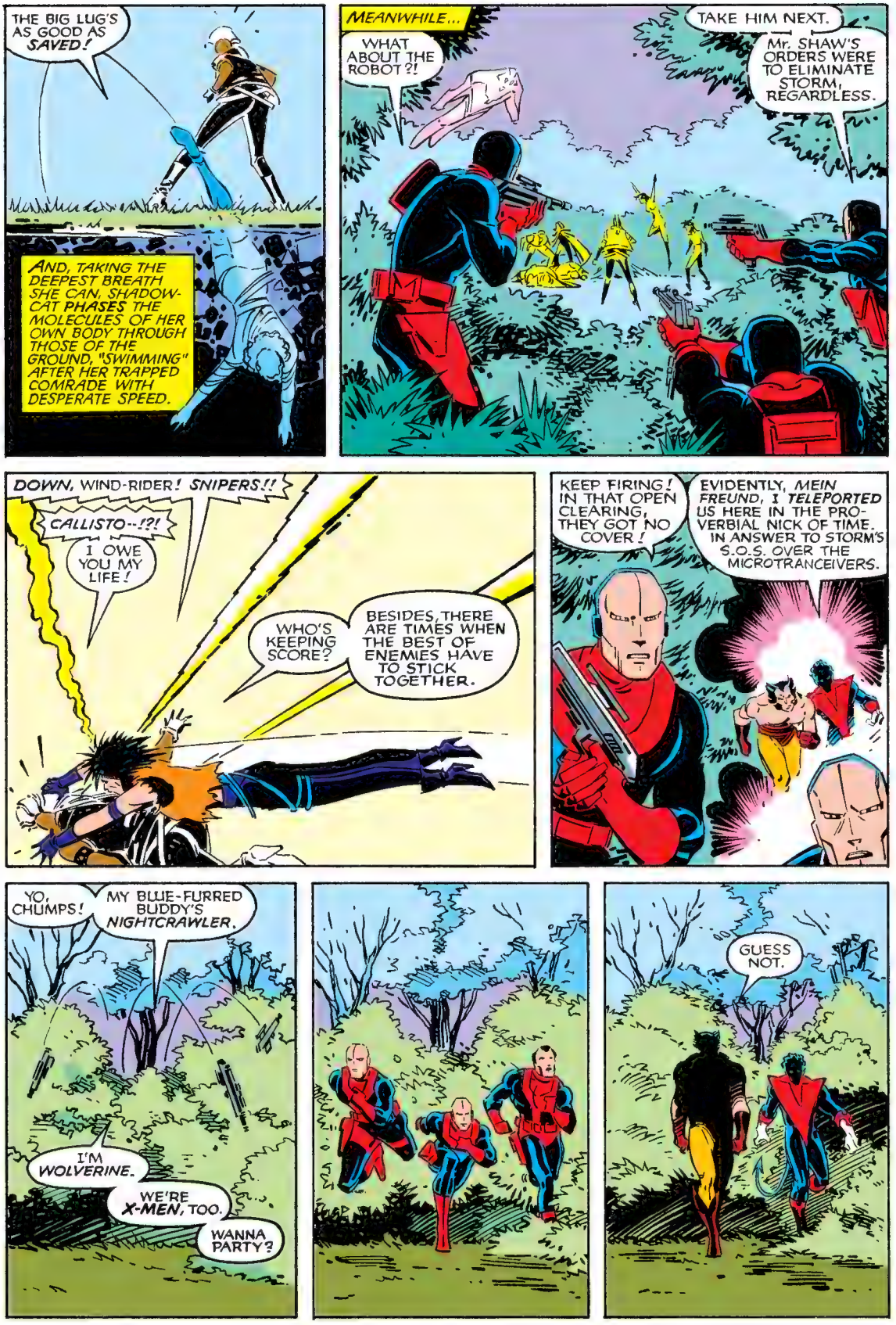
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN

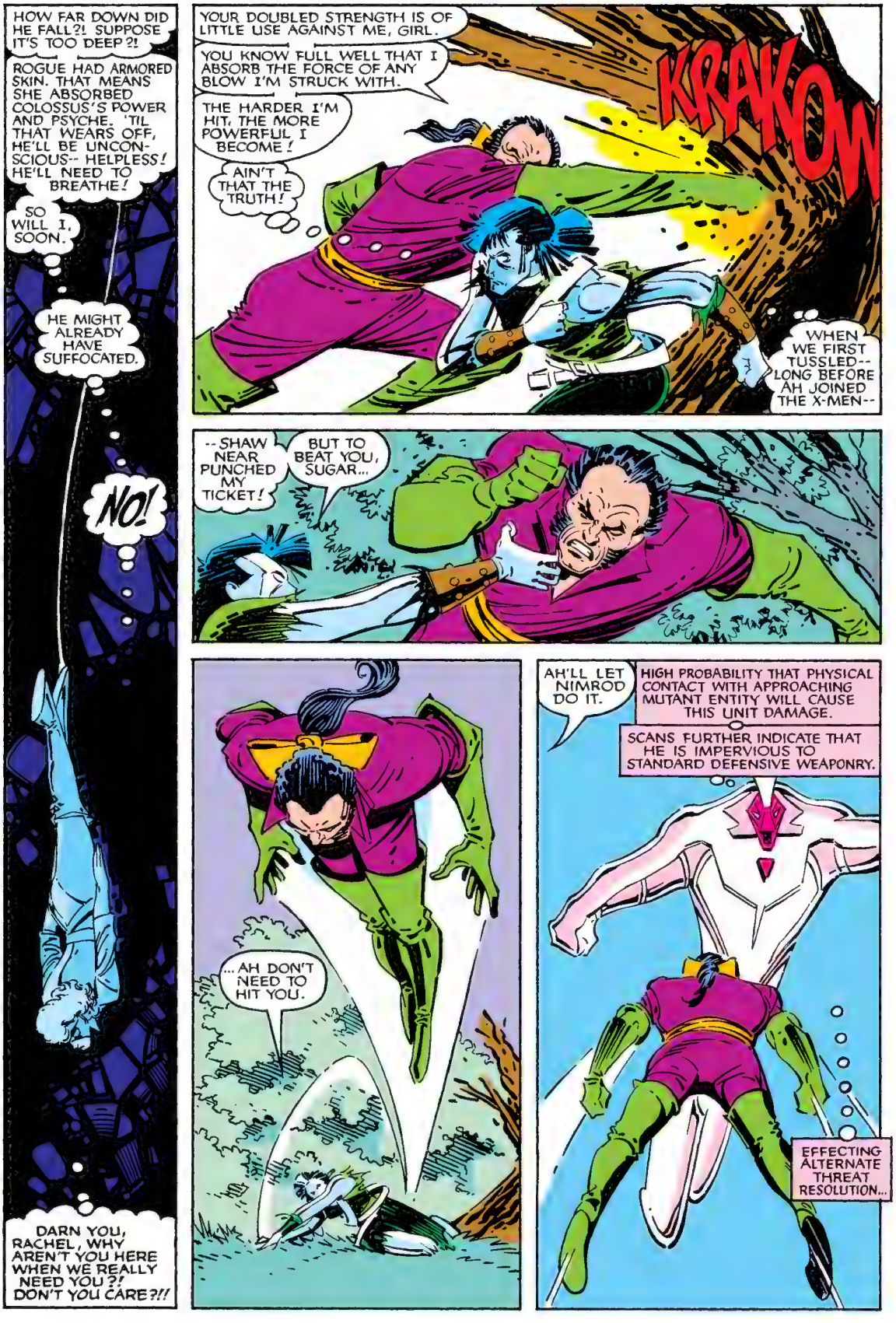

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
SALVATION
STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
IN CENTRAL PARK, MIDWAY THROUGH THIS FINE SPRING NIGHT, NINE MUTANTS HAVE JUST HEARD THEIR COLLECTIVE DEATH WARRANT...
...PRONOUNCED BY A MACHINE DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED FOR THAT PURPOSE ALONE.
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER JOHN ROMITA, Jr., BREAKDOWNS P. CRAIG RUSSELL, GUEST FINISHER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR IN CHIEF

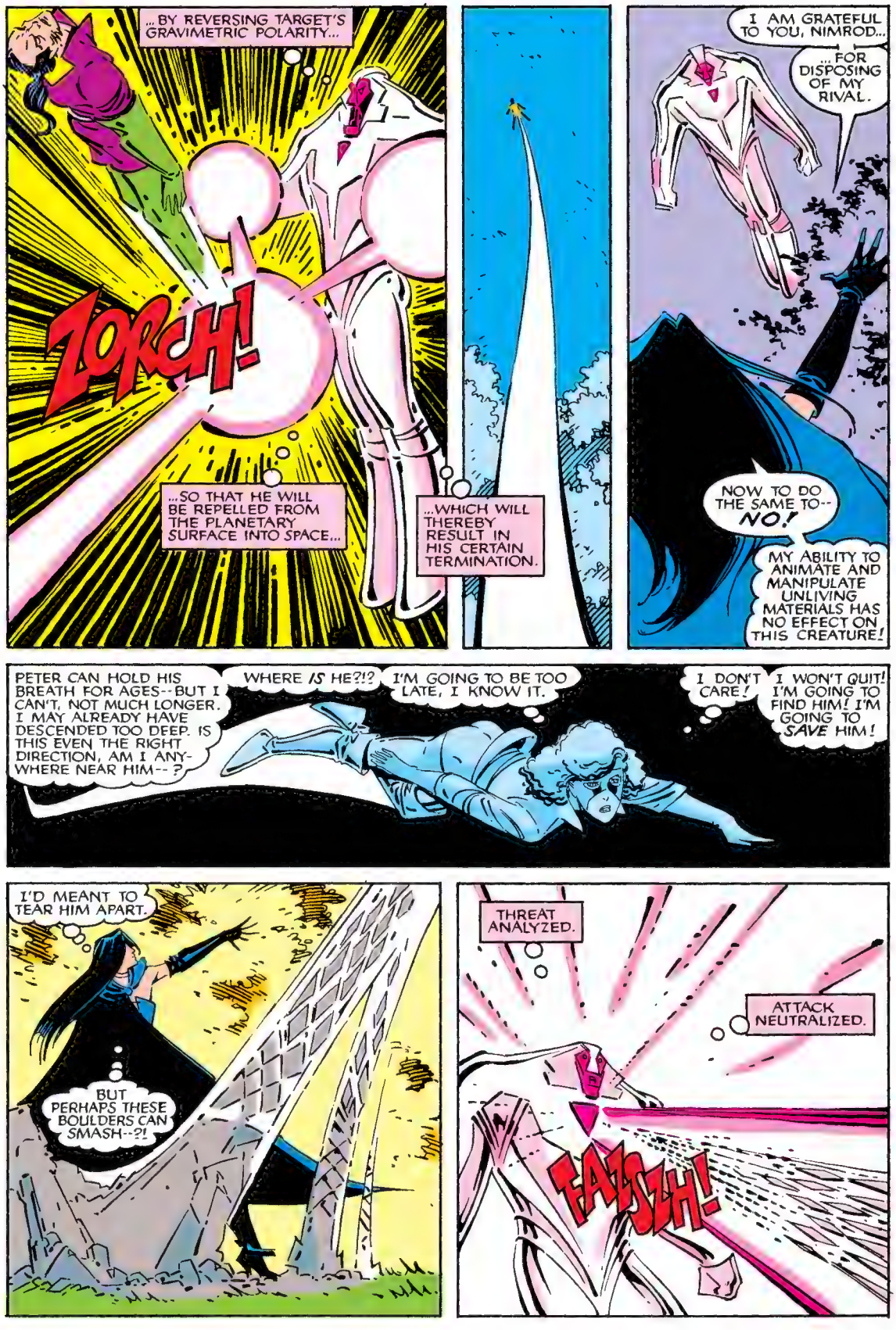

MOST OF THESE MUTANTS ARE THE LORDS CARDINAL OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB, LEADERS OF A SECRET CABAL WHOSE GOAL IS WORLD DOMINATION.
SELENE IS THEIR BLACK QUEEN.
"NIMROD," THE MECHANISM CALLS ITSELF-- AFTER THE GREATEST HUNTER IN HISTORY AND LEGEND.
WELL, CREATURE, SELENE IS A LEGEND HERSELF-- AND A POWER TO BE RECKONED WITH.
FRIEDRICH VON ROEHM IS THE BLACK ROOK, TRANSFORMED BY SELENE INTO A BLOODLUSTING MAN-BEAST.
SHE IS HIS GODDESS, AND HE WOULD DIE FOR HER--
--BUT HE'D MUCH RATHER KILL.
TESSA HAS NO TITLE, BUT WHEREVER SEBASTIAN SHAW-- THE BLACK KING, RULER OF THE LORDS CARDINAL--GOES...
...SHE IS ALWAYS AT HIS SIDE.
ANALYSIS, TESSA!
WE FACE AN EXTRAORDINARILY SOPHISTICATED ROBOT, SEBASTIAN.
ITS CAPABILITIES ARE AS YET UNKNOWN...
...BUT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO ASSUME THE WORST.
HARRY LELAND IS THE BLACK BISHOP.
SHAW'S SO CONFIDENT, CURSE HIM!
WHY CAN'T I BE AS STRONG-- HEART'S POUNDING--TOO FAST-- NEED A DRINK-- I WANT TO RUN AWAY-- DOES HE KNOW I'M AFRAID-- DOES THAT ROBOT-- THOSE EYES-- LIKE A SHARK'S, UTTERLY WITHOUT MERCY-- SO ALIEN, AND YET...
...SO HUMAN!
THESE TWO ARE X-MEN-- SHADOWCAT AND STORM-- OUTLAW HEROES, THE LORDS CARDINAL'S ARCH-FOES.
YOU WERE IN AFRICA WHEN WE TANGLED WITH THIS CREEP, STORM.*
WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE!
*X-MEN #194 -- A.


AND, LYING NEARBY, THE REASON EVERYBODY HAS COME TO THE PARK...
...RACHEL SUMMERS.
AN X-MAN-- PHOENIX --WHO EARLIER TRIED TO MURDER SELENE, ONLY TO BE STOPPED BY HER TEAMMATE, WOLVERINE.
THAT CONFRONTATION LEFT THE YOUNG TELEPATH MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.
SHE'S BEEN ON THE RUN EVER SINCE.
...CAN HEAR... OTHER THOUGHTS...
...GO AWAY...
...LEAVE ME ALONE...
...TOO TIRED-- TOO MUCH HURT-- CAN'T KEEP THEM OUT...
...NIMROD?!?
AGAINST HIM, X-MEN'LL NEED ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET.
WHY SHOULD I HELP?!
THEY'RE FAMILY!
THEN WHY'D WOLVERINE TRY HIS BEST TO KILL ME?!!
THEY DON'T WANT ME, THEY DON'T CARE-- I'M BETTER OFF ON MY OWN. AND SO ARE THEY!
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.
ONCE THIS UNIT HAS DEALT WITH CURRENT TARGETS...
...INITIAL TARGET-- ENTITY CODEXED "PHOENIX"-- WILL BE LOCATED AND NEUTRALIZED.
HE MEANS RACHEL!
STORM, WE BARELY BEAT HIM LAST TIME-- AN' THAT WAS WITH THE WHOLE TEAM!
WHAT CHANCE HAVE WE TWO GOT--
--FIGHTING NIMROD AND THESE HELLFIRE BOZOS?-
--ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY POWERS?!
TRUST ME, 'CAT.
THE ODDS WILL BECOME A TRIFLE MORE EVEN...
...IN HARDLY ANY TIME AT ALL.


AND, AS IF ON CUE...
THE GROUND-- SHAKING!
IMPOSSIBLE! EARTHQUAKES CAN'T HAPPEN IN NEW YORK!
GUESS AGAIN, TUBBO!
AH CAN MAKE ONE WHENEVER AH PLEASE!
HATED ABANDONING COLOSSUS UNDER-GROUND WHERE FATSO LELAND TRAPPED HIM--
--BUT STORM'S LEADER, SHE KNOWS BEST.
AH HOPE.
OH
BAM!
ROGUE!
HARRY--?!
HE'S STUNNED!
NOW, SHADOWCAT! WITH LELAND'S CONCENTRATION BROKEN, HIS MASS-SHIFTING POWER NO LONGER AFFECTS COLOSSUS!
WE CAN RESCUE HIM!
ON MY WAY, STORM.


THE BIG LUG'S AS GOOD AS SAVED!
AND, TAKING THE DEEPEST BREATH SHE CAN, SHADOW-CAT PHASES THE MOLECULES OF HER OWN BODY THROUGH THOSE OF THE GROUND, "SWIMMING" AFTER HER TRAPPED COMRADE WITH DESPERATE SPEED.
MEANWHILE...
WHAT ABOUT THE ROBOT?!
TAKE HIM NEXT.
Mr. SHAW'S ORDERS WERE TO ELIMINATE STORM, REGARDLESS.
DOWN, WIND-RIDER! SNIPERS!!
CALLISTO--!?!
I OWE YOU MY LIFE!
WHO'S KEEPING SCORE?
BESIDES, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE BEST OF ENEMIES HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER.
KEEP FIRING! IN THAT OPEN CLEARING, THEY GOT NO COVER!
EVIDENTLY, MEIN FREUND, I TELEPORTED US HERE IN THE PRO-VERBIAL NICK OF TIME. IN ANSWER TO STORM'S S.O.S. OVER THE MICROTRANCEIVERS.
YO, CHUMPS!
MY BLUE-FURRED BUDDY'S NIGHTCRAWLER.
I'M WOLVERINE.
WE'RE X-MEN, TOO.
WANNA PARTY?
GUESS NOT.


HOW FAR DOWN DID HE FALL?! SUPPOSE IT'S TOO DEEP?!
ROGUE HAD ARMORED SKIN. THAT MEANS SHE ABSORBED COLOSSUS'S POWER AND PSYCHE. 'TIL THAT WEARS OFF, HE'LL BE UNCONSCIOUS-- HELPLESS! HE'LL NEED TO BREATHE!
SO WILL I, SOON.
HE MIGHT ALREADY HAVE SUFFOCATED.
NO!
DARN YOU, RACHEL, WHY AREN'T YOU HERE WHEN WE REALLY NEED YOU?! DON'T YOU CARE?!!
YOUR DOUBLED STRENGTH IS OF LITTLE USE AGAINST ME, GIRL.
YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT I ABSORB THE FORCE OF ANY BLOW I'M STRUCK WITH.
THE HARDER I'M HIT, THE MORE POWERFUL I BECOME!
AIN'T THAT THE TRUTH!
KRAKOW
WHEN WE FIRST TUSSLED-- LONG BEFORE AH JOINED THE X-MEN--
-- SHAW NEAR PUNCHED MY TICKET!
BUT TO BEAT YOU, SUGAR...
... AH DON'T NEED TO HIT YOU.
AH'LL LET NIMROD DO IT.
HIGH PROBABILITY THAT PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH APPROACHING MUTANT ENTITY WILL CAUSE THIS UNIT DAMAGE.
SCANS FURTHER INDICATE THAT HE IS IMPERVIOUS TO STANDARD DEFENSIVE WEAPONRY.
EFFECTING ALTERNATE THREAT RESOLUTION...

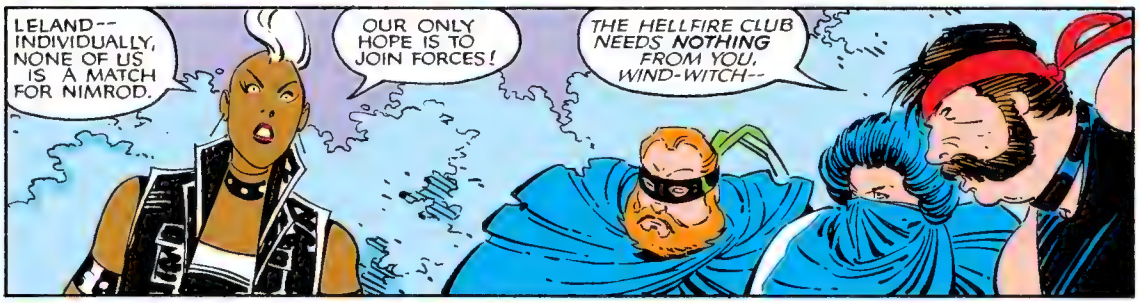

...BY REVERSING TARGET'S GRAVIMETRIC POLARITY...
ZORCH!
...SO THAT HE WILL BE REPELLED FROM THE PLANETARY SURFACE INTO SPACE...
...WHICH WILL THEREBY RESULT IN HIS CERTAIN TERMINATION.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, NIMROD...
...FOR DISPOSING OF MY RIVAL.
NOW TO DO THE SAME TO-- NO!
MY ABILITY TO ANIMATE AND MANIPULATE UNLIVING MATERIALS HAS NO EFFECT ON THIS CREATURE!
PETER CAN HOLD HIS BREATH FOR AGES--BUT I CAN'T, NOT MUCH LONGER. I MAY ALREADY HAVE DESCENDED TOO DEEP. IS THIS EVEN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AM I ANY-WHERE NEAR HIM--?
WHERE IS HE?!?
I'M GOING TO BE TOO LATE, I KNOW IT.
I DON'T CARE!
I WON'T QUIT! I'M GOING TO FIND HIM! I'M GOING TO SAVE HIM!
I'D MEANT TO TEAR HIM APART.
BUT PERHAPS THESE BOULDERS CAN SMASH--?!
THREAT ANALYZED.
ATTACK NEUTRALIZED.
FAZSZH!

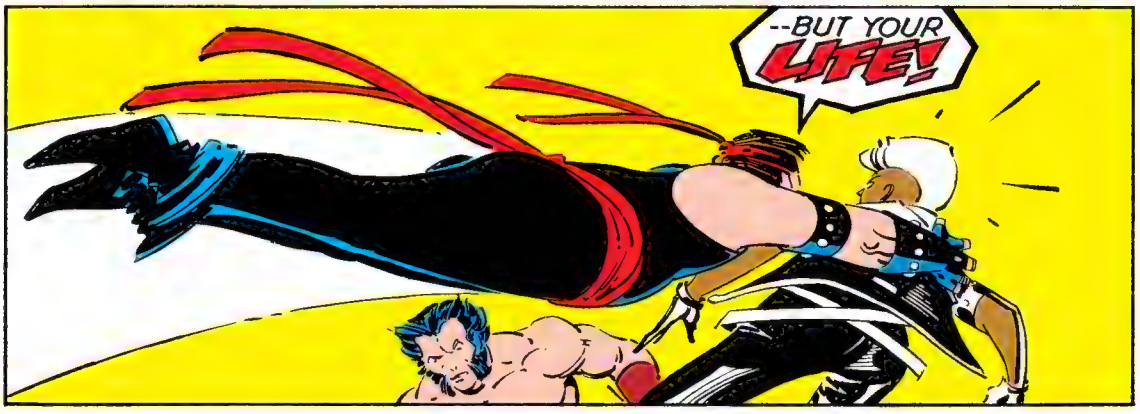
WHAT'S HE WAITIN' FOR? WHY'S HE HOLDIN' BACK?!
EVALUATING OUR CAPABILITIES, I SUSPECT. DETERMINING OUR WEAKNESSES, THE MORE EFFICIENTLY TO PUT AN END TO US.
AND WHY SHOULD HE ATTACK, WHEN WE MUTANTS ARE ALL TOO EAGER TO SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER?
CUTE. POWERS DON'T SEEM TO FAZE IT MUCH.
LET'S TRY SOME HELLFIRE TECHNOLOGY.

WEAPON DISCHARGES HIGH-VELOCITY EXPLOSIVE PROJECTILES.
BYEOW VI' VI' BRANG
DAMAGE TO UNIT NEGLIGIBLE AND COSMETIC.

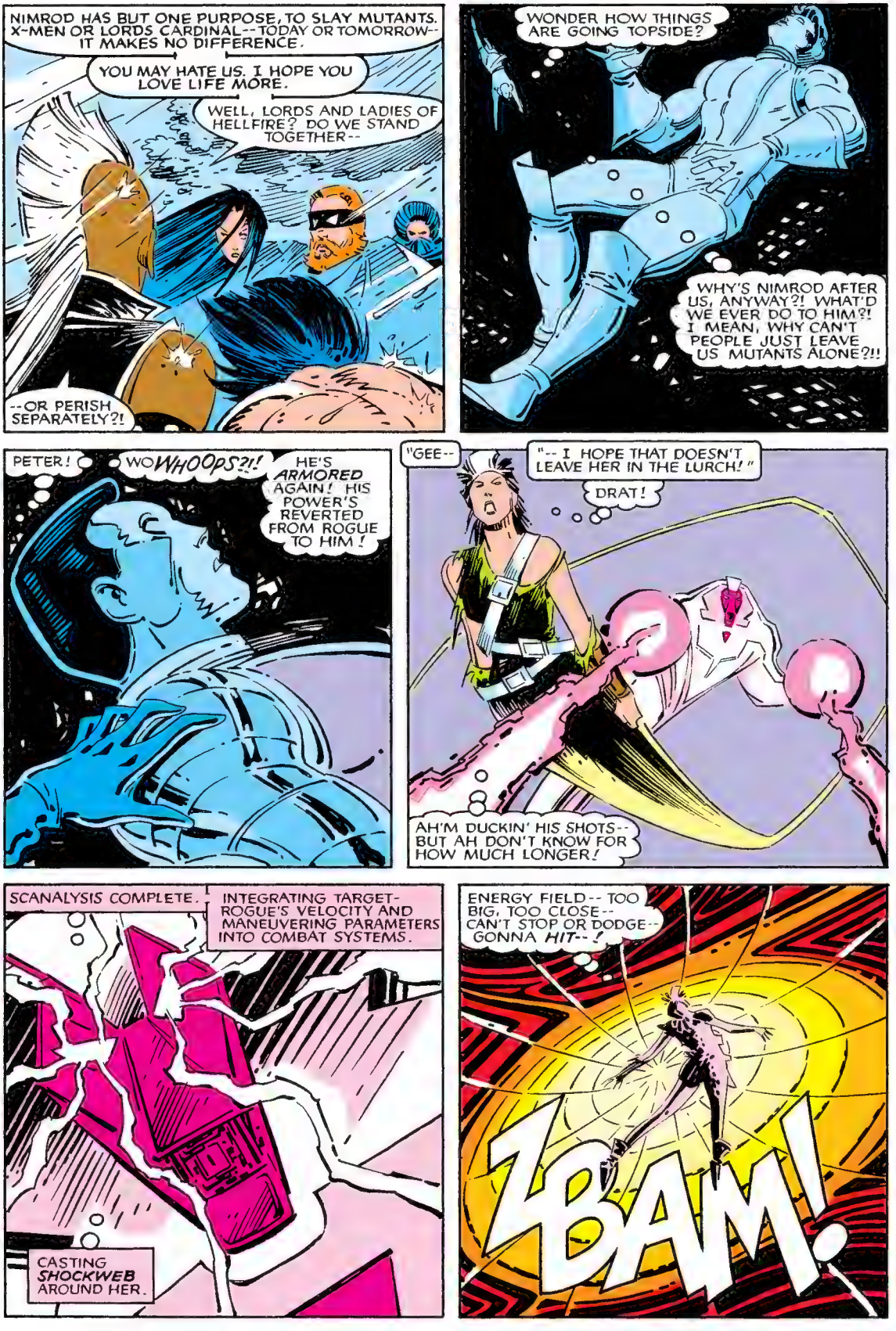
SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA. CALIBAN, CAN YOU STILL SENSE PHOENIX?!
CALIBAN SEES HER STRANGEBORN AURA IN HIS THOUGHTS -- BUT IT IS VERY DIM.
YOU TWO CAN'T HELP HERE. WHATEVER HAPPENS TO US, CALLISTO, FIND PHOENIX. KEEP HER SAFE.

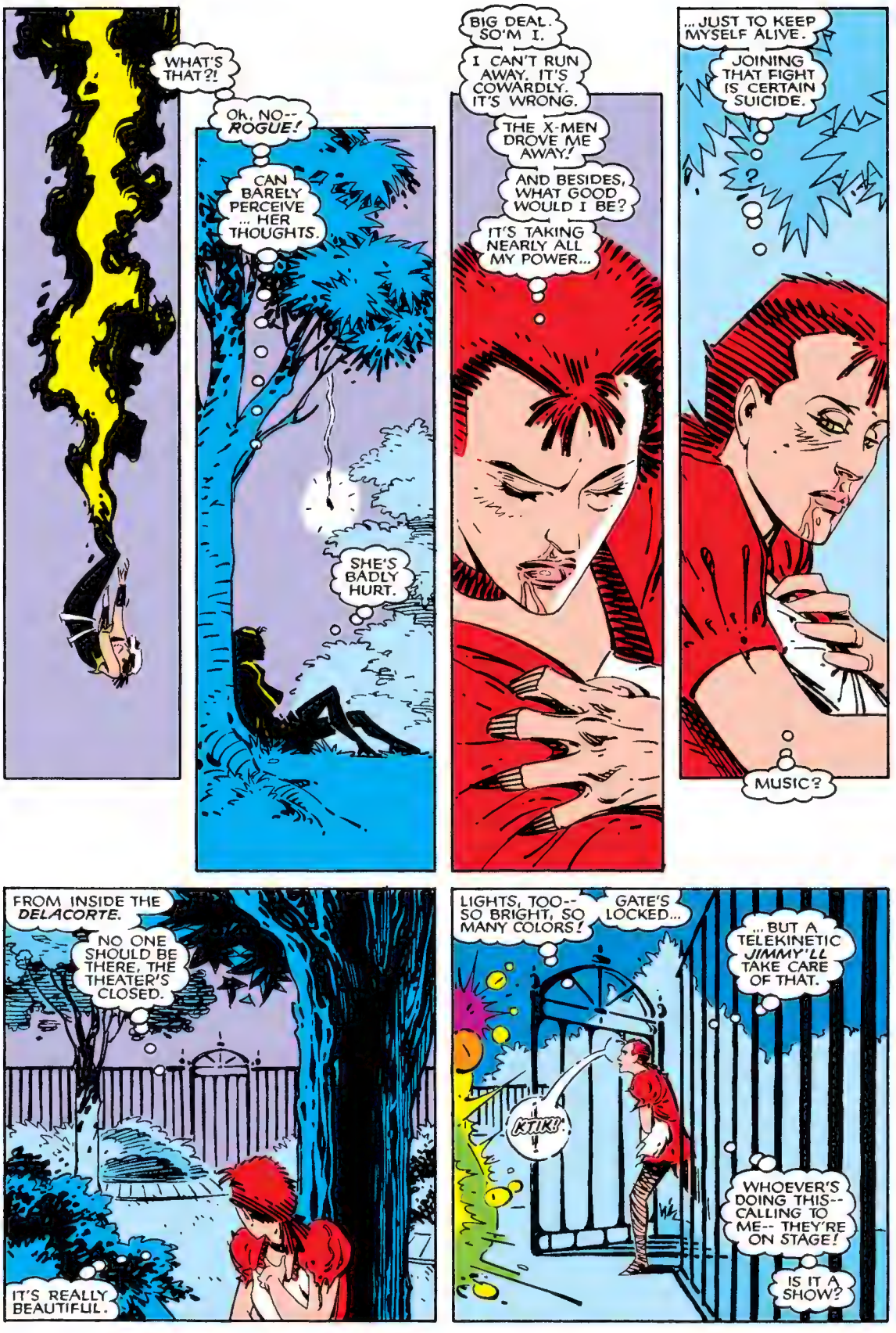
AH'LL FLY INTERFERENCE FOR Y'ALL!
STORM DON'T SOUND TOO HOPEFUL ABOUT THIS SCRAP. CAN'T SAY AH BLAME HER, EITHER. CAN'T FIGHT NIMROD AND THE LORDS CARDINAL.

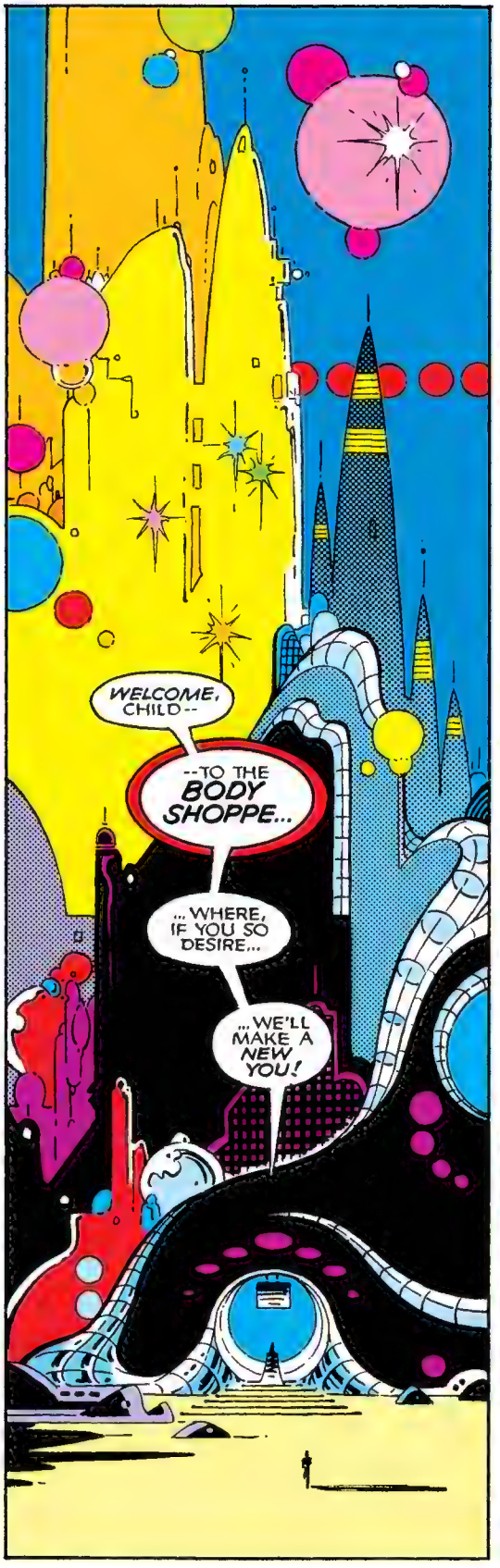

LELAND -- INDIVIDUALLY, NONE OF US IS A MATCH FOR NIMROD.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO JOIN FORCES!
THE HELLFIRE CLUB NEEDS NOTHING FROM YOU, WIND-WITCH--


--BUT YOUR LIFE!

BACK OFF, BLIMP--
--OR WE'LL MATCH YOUR CLAWS AGAINST MINE...
...AN' SEE WHO COMES OUT ON TOP.
KRAK!
GLUTTON FOR PUNISHMENT, huh?
OKAY, BUB-- YOU WERE WARNED.
FZAT-ZK!
CRIPES!?!
THE ROBOT-- DIS-INTEGRATED HIM!
WHAT, YOU FIGURED THIS WAS A GAME, ELF?
SUCKER MEANS BUSINESS.
IF WE KEEP ON THE WAY WE ARE-- FIGHTING AMONGST OURSELVES--
--WE SHALL ALL SHARE VON ROEHM'S FATE.
EVEN IF THEY AGREE, CAN WE TRUST 'EM?
HAVE WE ANY ALTERNATIVE?
I'LL BET, RIGHT WHEN WE NEED 'EM MOST, THOSE HELLFIRE CREEPS'LL CUT AN' RUN, AN' LET NIMROD DO THEIR DIRTY WORK FOR 'EM.
HEY--THE SKY-- SUDDENLY, THE WEATHER'S NASTY AS CAN BE.
WONDER IF THIS IS STORM'S DOIN'?

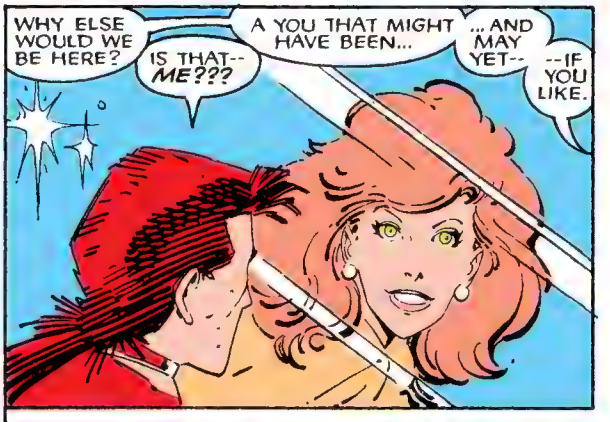

NIMROD HAS BUT ONE PURPOSE, TO SLAY MUTANTS. X-MEN OR LORDS CARDINAL--TODAY OR TOMORROW--IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.
YOU MAY HATE US. I HOPE YOU LOVE LIFE MORE.
WELL, LORDS AND LADIES OF HELLFIRE? DO WE STAND TOGETHER--
--OR PERISH SEPARATELY?!
WONDER HOW THINGS ARE GOING TOPSIDE?
WHY'S NIMROD AFTER US, ANYWAY?! WHAT'D WE EVER DO TO HIM?! I MEAN, WHY CAN'T PEOPLE JUST LEAVE US MUTANTS ALONE?!!
PETER!
WOWHOOPS?!!
HE'S ARMORED AGAIN! HIS POWER'S REVERTED FROM ROGUE TO HIM!
"GEE--
"-- I HOPE THAT DOESN'T LEAVE HER IN THE LURCH!"
DRAT!
AH'M DUCKIN' HIS SHOTS-- BUT AH DON'T KNOW FOR HOW MUCH LONGER!
SCANALYSIS COMPLETE.
INTEGRATING TARGET-ROGUE'S VELOCITY AND MANEUVERING PARAMETERS INTO COMBAT SYSTEMS.
CASTING SHOCKWEB AROUND HER.
ENERGY FIELD-- TOO BIG, TOO CLOSE-- CAN'T STOP OR DODGE-- GONNA HIT--!
ZBAM!

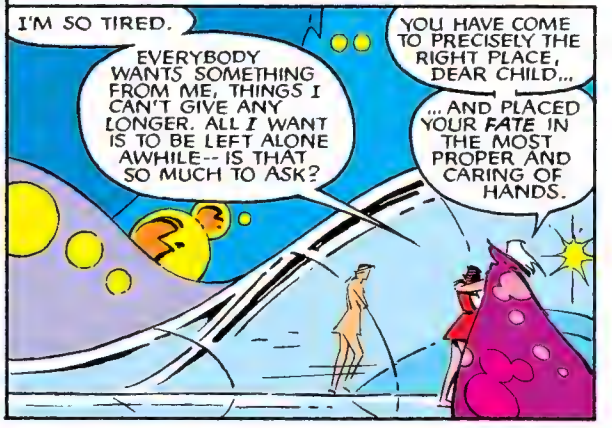

WHAT'S THAT?!
OH, NO-- ROGUE!
CAN BARELY PERCEIVE ... HER THOUGHTS.
SHE'S BADLY HURT.
BIG DEAL. SO'M I.
I CAN'T RUN AWAY. IT'S COWARDLY. IT'S WRONG.
THE X-MEN DROVE ME AWAY!
AND BESIDES, WHAT GOOD WOULD I BE?
IT'S TAKING NEARLY ALL MY POWER...
...JUST TO KEEP MYSELF ALIVE.
JOINING THAT FIGHT IS CERTAIN SUICIDE.
MUSIC?
FROM INSIDE THE DELACORTE.
NO ONE SHOULD BE THERE, THE THEATER'S CLOSED.
IT'S REALLY BEAUTIFUL.
LIGHTS, TOO-- SO BRIGHT, SO MANY COLORS!
GATE'S LOCKED...
KTIK!
...BUT A TELEKINETIC JIMMY'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT.
WHOEVER'S DOING THIS-- CALLING TO ME-- THEY'RE ON STAGE!
IS IT A SHOW?

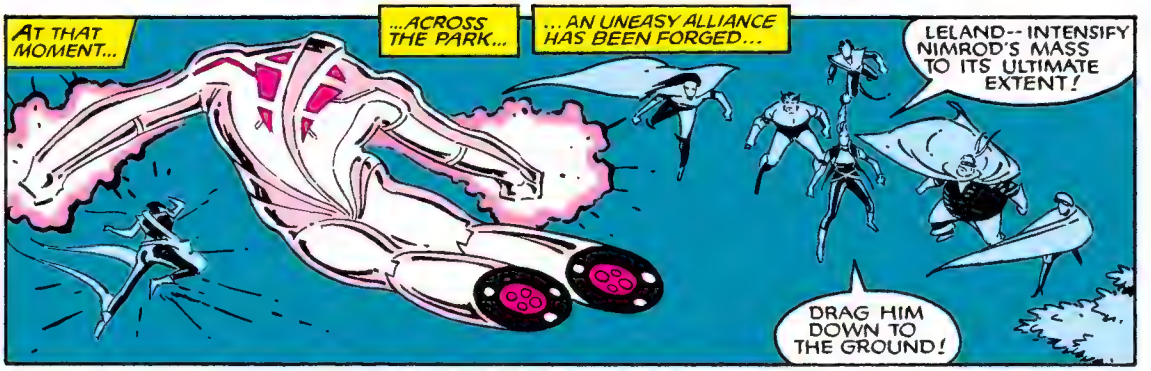

WELCOME, CHILD--
--TO THE BODY SHOPPE...
...WHERE, IF YOU SO DESIRE...
...WE'LL MAKE A NEW YOU!

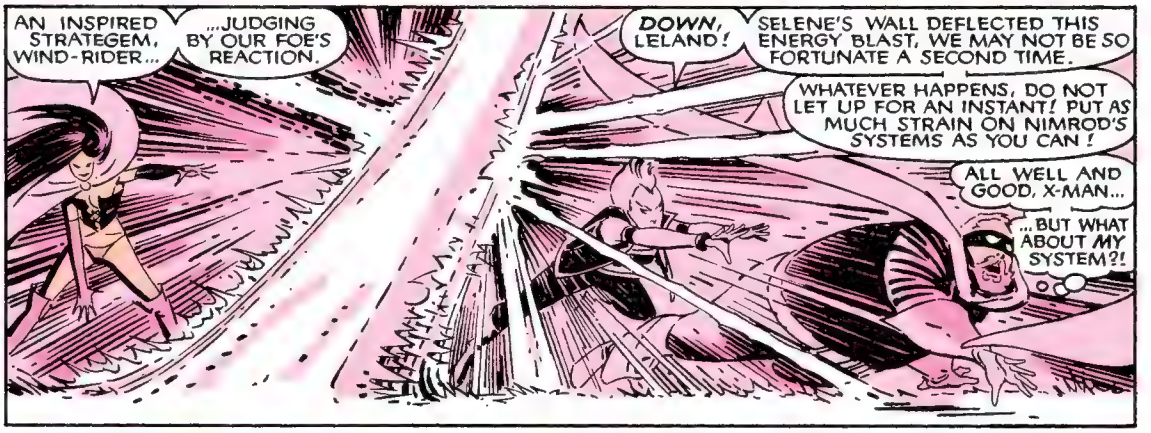
I... DON'T UNDER-STAND.
THIS IS A THEATER. THE STAGE WAS BARE-- EMPTY-- HOW DID YOU...?
MAGIC, OF COURSE.
A SUPERIOR ESTABLISHMENT STANDS EVER READY TO FULFILL THE DREAMS OF ITS CLIENTELE.
ANYTIME. ANYPLACE.

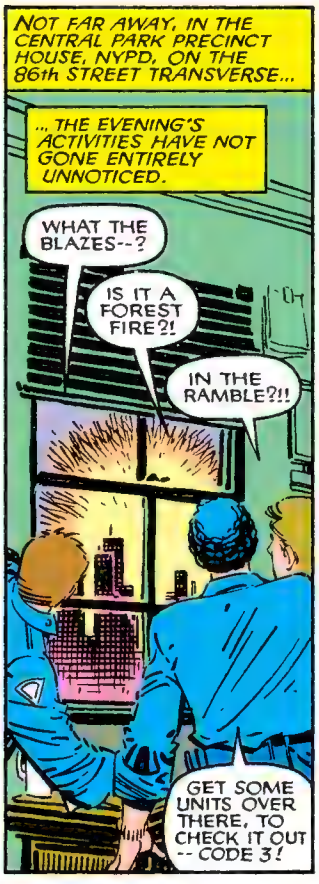
IS MADAMOISELLE DISSATISFIED WITH HER APPEARANCE? WOULD MADAMOISELLE PERHAPS LIKE... A CHANGE?
CAN YOU DO THAT...
...MAKE ME LOOK DIFFERENT?

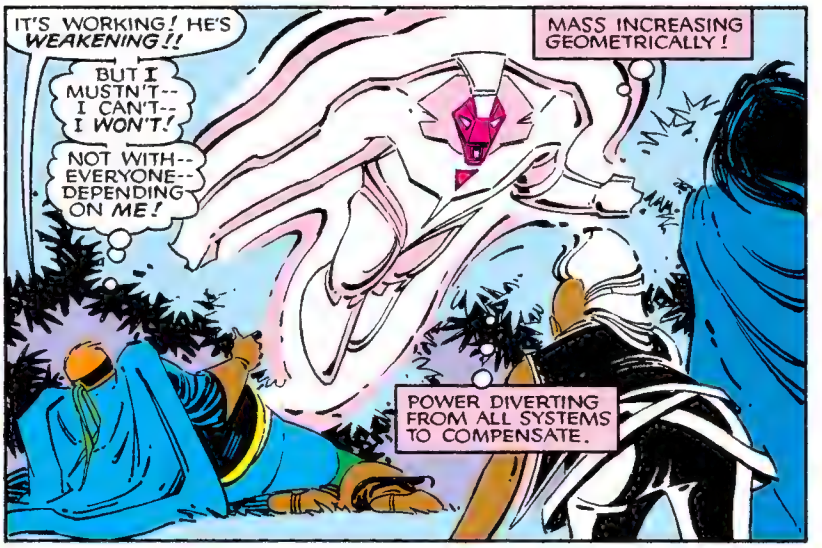

WHY ELSE WOULD WE BE HERE?
IS THAT-- ME???
A YOU THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN...
...AND MAY YET--
--IF YOU LIKE.


I'M SO TIRED.
EVERYBODY WANTS SOMETHING FROM ME, THINGS I CAN'T GIVE ANY LONGER. ALL I WANT IS TO BE LEFT ALONE AWHILE-- IS THAT SO MUCH TO ASK?
YOU HAVE COME TO PRECISELY THE RIGHT PLACE, DEAR CHILD...
...AND PLACED YOUR FATE IN THE MOST PROPER AND CARING OF HANDS.

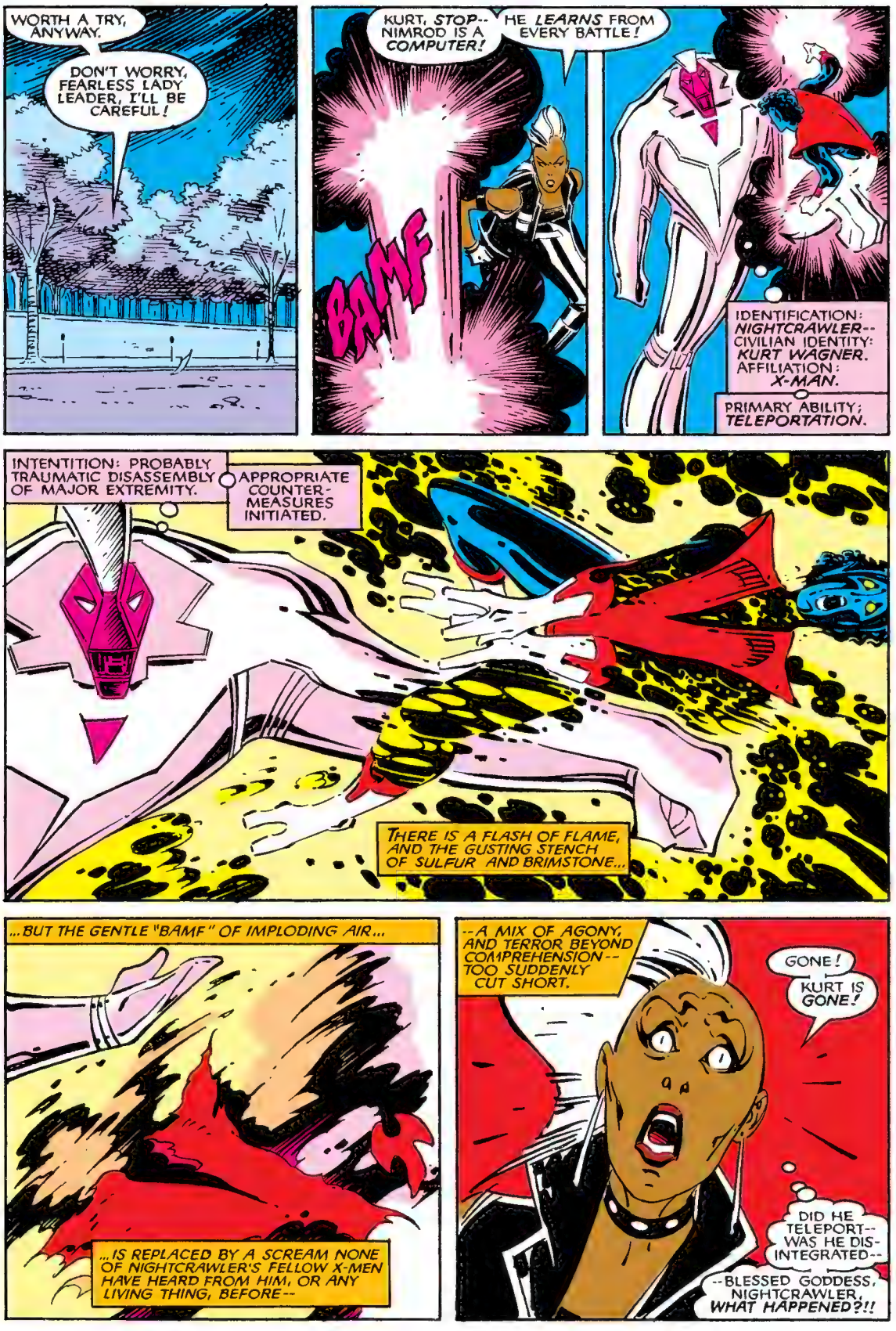

AT THAT MOMENT...
...ACROSS THE PARK...
...AN UNEASY ALLIANCE HAS BEEN FORGED...
LELAND--INTENSIFY NIMROD'S MASS TO ITS ULTIMATE EXTENT!
DRAG HIM DOWN TO THE GROUND!

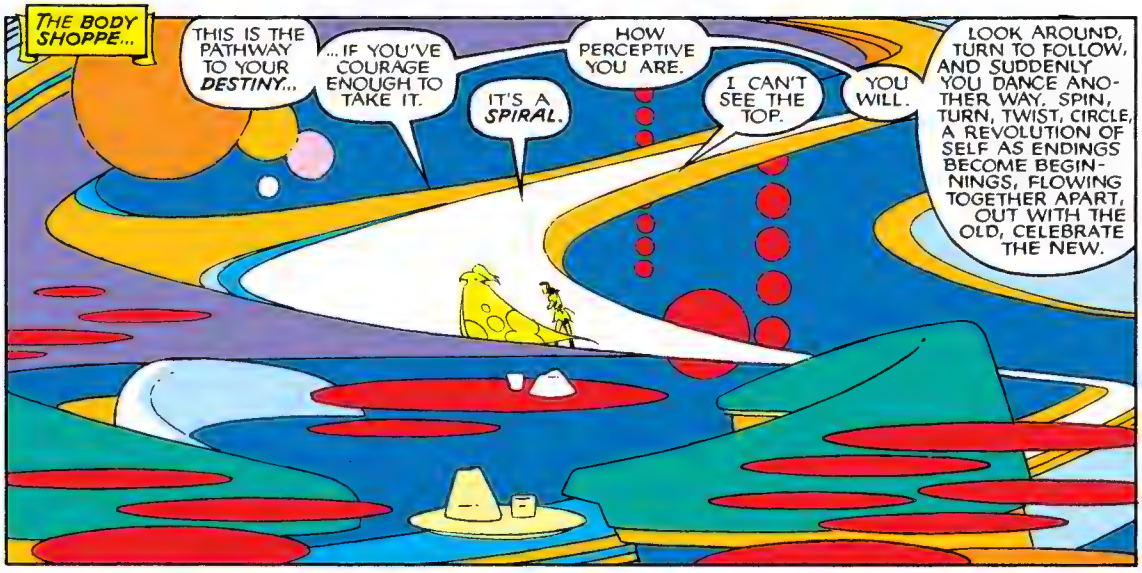

AN INSPIRED STRATEGEM, WIND-RIDER...
...JUDGING BY OUR FOE'S REACTION.
DOWN, LELAND!
SELENE'S WALL DEFLECTED THIS ENERGY BLAST, WE MAY NOT BE SO FORTUNATE A SECOND TIME.
WHATEVER HAPPENS, DO NOT LET UP FOR AN INSTANT! PUT AS MUCH STRAIN ON NIMROD'S SYSTEMS AS YOU CAN!
ALL WELL AND GOOD, X-MAN...
...BUT WHAT ABOUT MY SYSTEM?!


NOT FAR AWAY, IN THE CENTRAL PARK PRECINCT HOUSE, NYPD, ON THE 86th STREET TRANSVERSE...
...THE EVENING'S ACTIVITIES HAVE NOT GONE ENTIRELY UNNOTICED.
WHAT THE BLAZES--?
IS IT A FOREST FIRE?!
IN THE RAMBLE?!!
GET SOME UNITS OVER THERE, TO CHECK IT OUT -- CODE 3!


IT'S WORKING! HE'S WEAKENING!!
MASS INCREASING GEOMETRICALLY!
BUT I MUSTN'T-- I CAN'T-- I WON'T!
NOT WITH-- EVERYONE-- DEPENDING ON ME!
POWER DIVERTING FROM ALL SYSTEMS TO COMPENSATE.

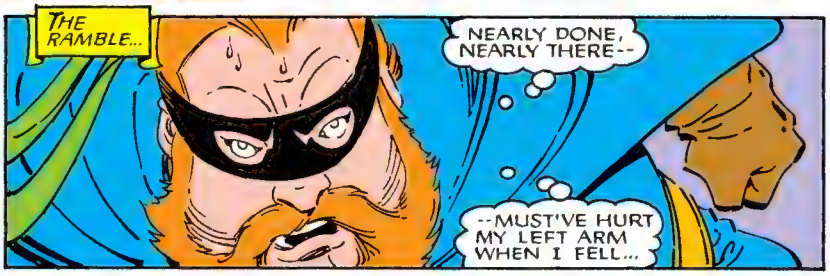
HE'S STOPPED SHOOTING!
NOW, STORM--WHILE HE'S VULNERABLE-- I WANT TO TRY THE STUNT ROGUE USED ON HIM LAST TIME, TELEPORTING A PIECE OF HIM AND LEAVING THE REST. THE RESULTANT DISRUPTION SHOULD FINISH HIM!
WE DARE NOT, NIGHTCRAWLER-- PRECISELY BECAUSE WE HAVE USED IT BEFORE!

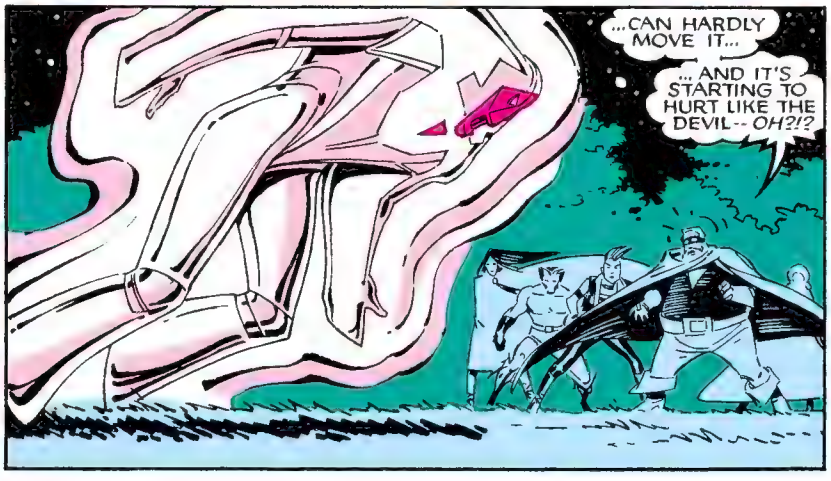

WORTH A TRY, ANYWAY.
DON'T WORRY, FEARLESS LADY LEADER, I'LL BE CAREFUL!
KURT, STOP-- NIMROD IS A COMPUTER!
HE LEARNS FROM EVERY BATTLE!
BAMF
IDENTIFICATION: NIGHTCRAWLER-- CIVILIAN IDENTITY: KURT WAGNER. AFFILIATION: X-MAN.
PRIMARY ABILITY: TELEPORTATION.
INTENTITION: PROBABLY TRAUMATIC DISASSEMBLY OF MAJOR EXTREMITY.
APPROPRIATE COUNTER-MEASURES INITIATED.
THERE IS A FLASH OF FLAME, AND THE GUSTING STENCH OF SULFUR AND BRIMSTONE...
...BUT THE GENTLE "BAMF" OF IMPLODING AIR...
...IS REPLACED BY A SCREAM NONE OF NIGHTCRAWLER'S FELLOW X-MEN HAVE HEARD FROM HIM, OR ANY LIVING THING, BEFORE--
--A MIX OF AGONY, AND TERROR BEYOND COMPREHENSION-- TOO SUDDENLY CUT SHORT.
GONE! KURT IS GONE!
DID HE TELEPORT-- WAS HE DIS-INTEGRATED--
--BLESSED GODDESS, NIGHTCRAWLER, WHAT HAPPENED?!!

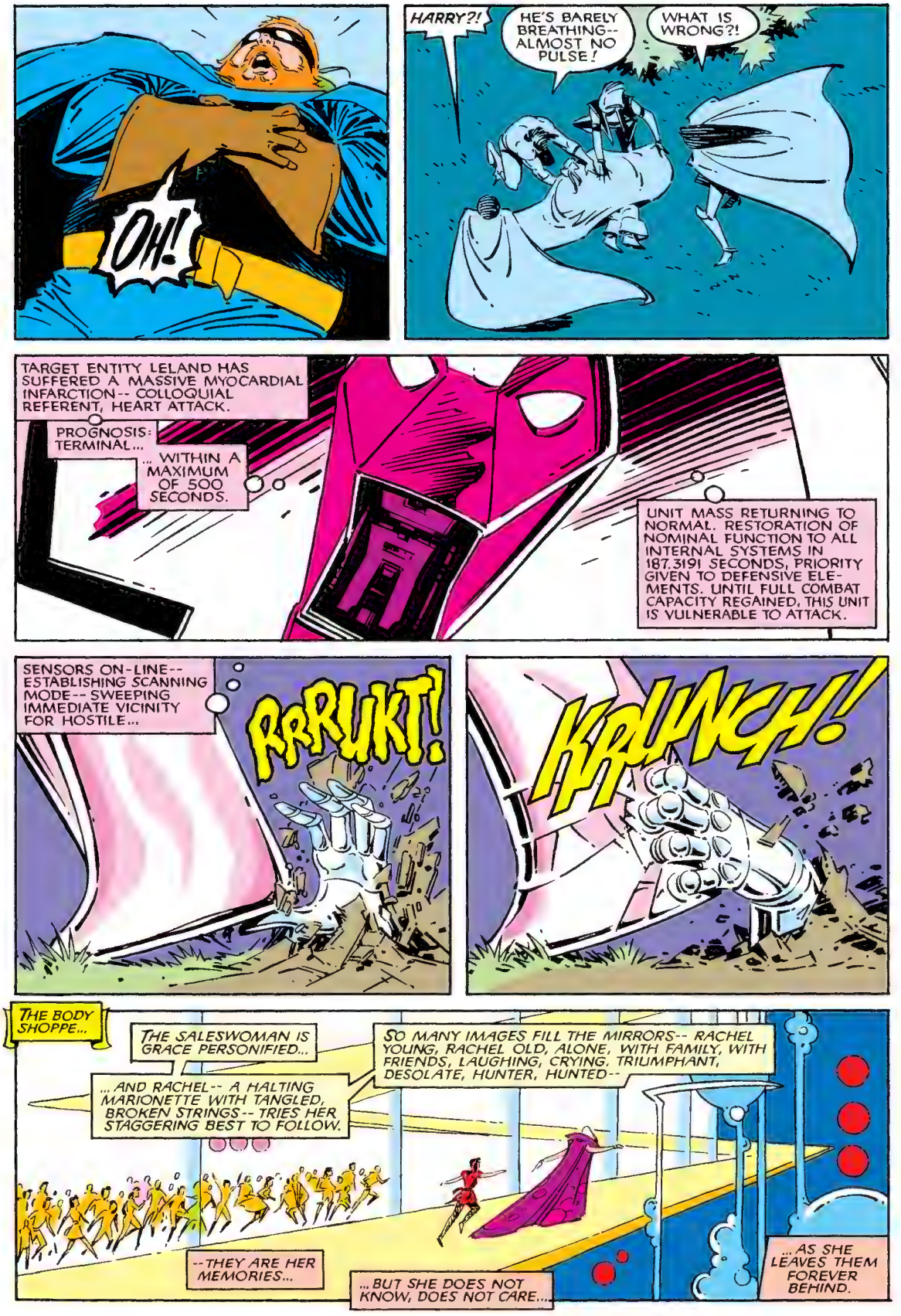

THE BODY SHOPPE...
THIS IS THE PATHWAY TO YOUR DESTINY...
...IF YOU'VE COURAGE ENOUGH TO TAKE IT.
IT'S A SPIRAL.
HOW PERCEPTIVE YOU ARE.
I CAN'T SEE THE TOP.
YOU WILL.
LOOK AROUND, TURN TO FOLLOW, AND SUDDENLY YOU DANCE ANOTHER WAY. SPIN, TURN, TWIST, CIRCLE, A REVOLUTION OF SELF AS ENDINGS BECOME BEGINNINGS, FLOWING TOGETHER APART, OUT WITH THE OLD, CELEBRATE THE NEW.

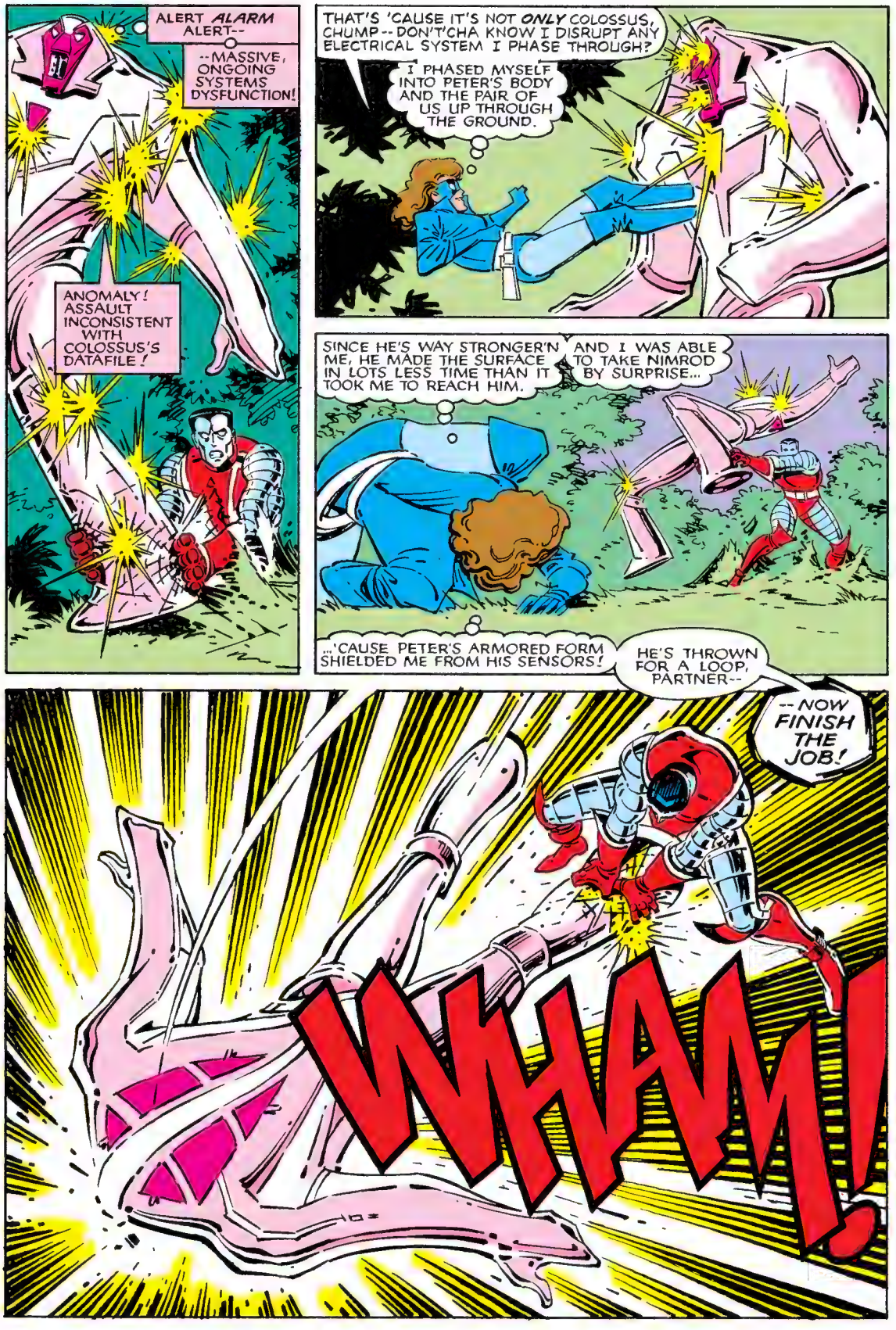
YOU CAN CHANGE MY FACE...
...SO NO ONE WILL RECOGNIZE ME?
THE BODY SHOPPE GUARANTEES SATISFACTION...
...OR YOUR MONEY BACK.
SHE TAKES A FIRST, HESITANT STEP. A SECOND-- AND WITH EACH...

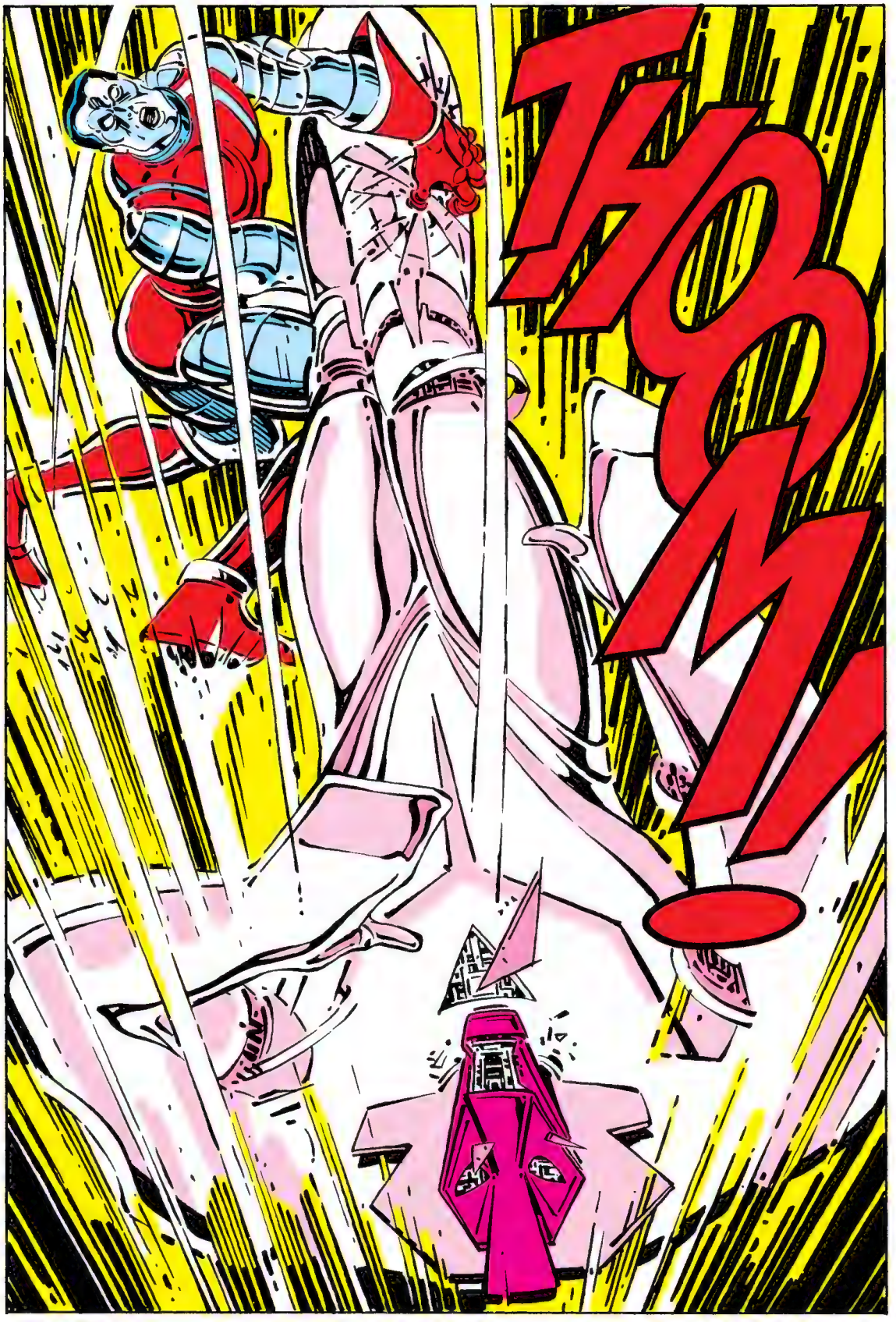
...LEAVES A DIFFERENT REFLECTION-- A DIFFERENT IMAGE OF HERSELF-- FROZEN IN A MIRROR BEHIND HER. FORGOTTEN.

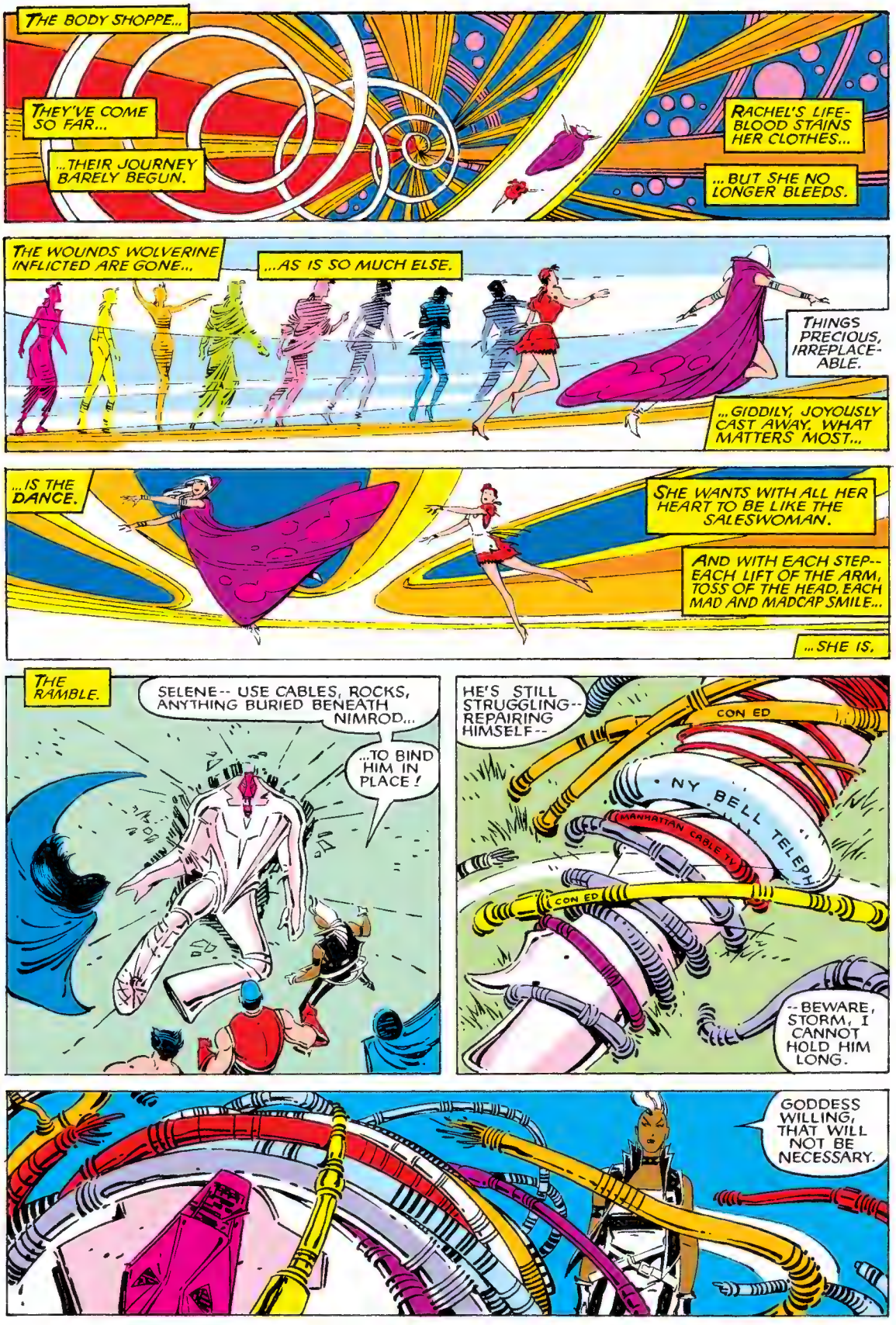


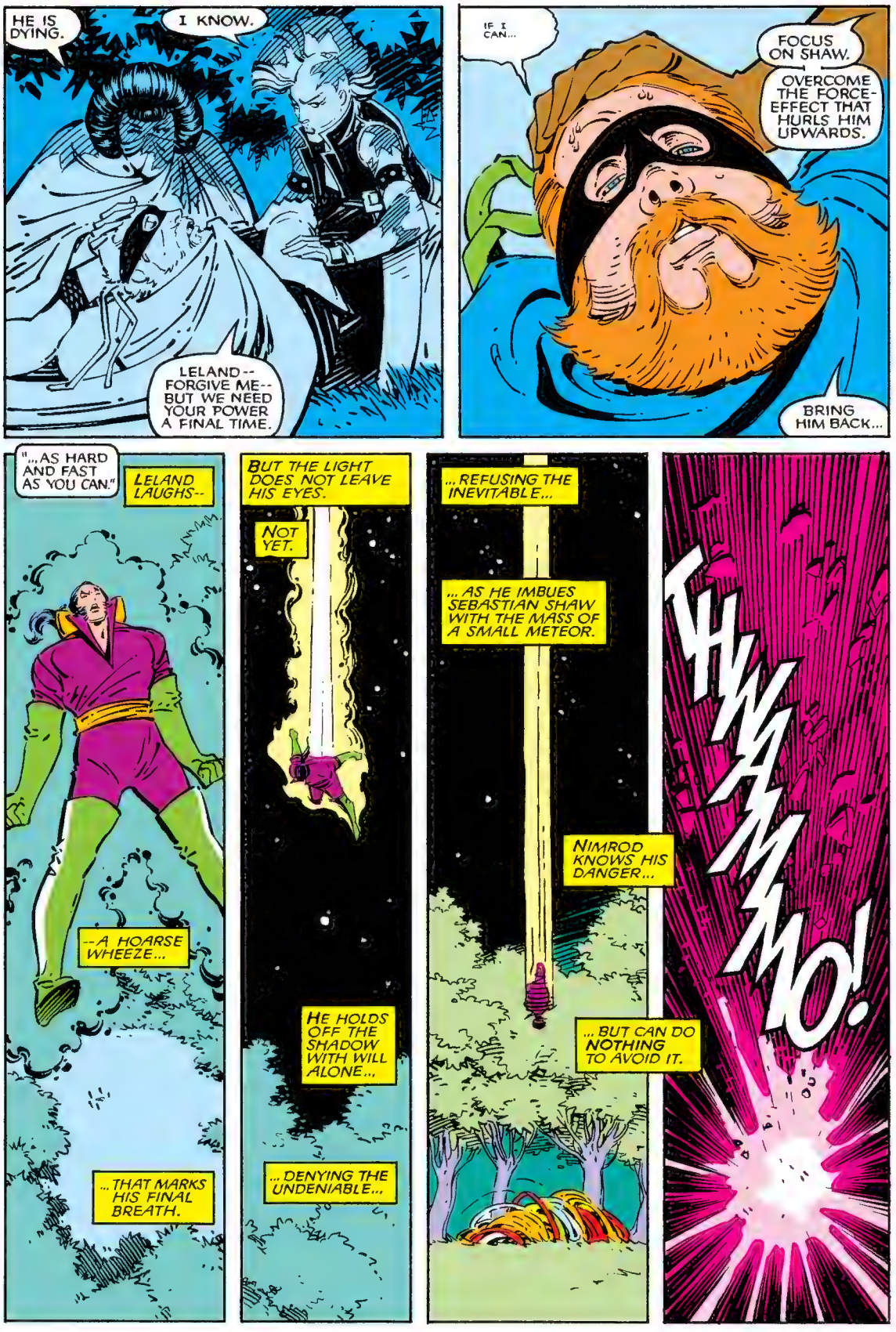



OH!
HARRY?!
HE'S BARELY BREATHING-- ALMOST NO PULSE!
WHAT IS WRONG?!
TARGET ENTITY LELAND HAS SUFFERED A MASSIVE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION-- COLLOQUIAL REFERENT, HEART ATTACK.
PROGNOSIS: TERMINAL...
... WITHIN A MAXIMUM OF 500 SECONDS.
UNIT MASS RETURNING TO NORMAL. RESTORATION OF NOMINAL FUNCTION TO ALL INTERNAL SYSTEMS IN 187.3191 SECONDS, PRIORITY GIVEN TO DEFENSIVE ELEMENTS. UNTIL FULL COMBAT CAPACITY REGAINED, THIS UNIT IS VULNERABLE TO ATTACK.
SENSORS ON-LINE-- ESTABLISHING SCANNING MODE-- SWEEPING IMMEDIATE VICINITY FOR HOSTILE...
RRRUKT!
KRUNCH!
THE BODY SHOPPE...
THE SALESWOMAN IS GRACE PERSONIFIED...
...AND RACHEL-- A HALTING MARIONETTE WITH TANGLED, BROKEN STRINGS-- TRIES HER STAGGERING BEST TO FOLLOW.
SO MANY IMAGES FILL THE MIRRORS-- RACHEL YOUNG, RACHEL OLD, ALONE, WITH FAMILY, WITH FRIENDS, LAUGHING, CRYING, TRIUMPHANT, DESOLATE, HUNTER, HUNTED--
--THEY ARE HER MEMORIES...
...BUT SHE DOES NOT KNOW, DOES NOT CARE....
...AS SHE LEAVES THEM FOREVER BEHIND.

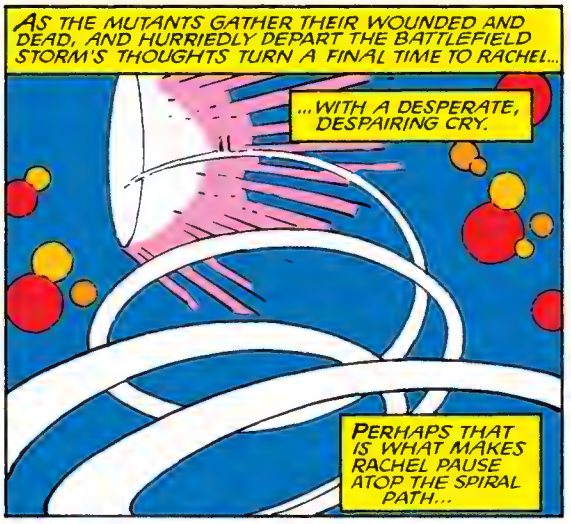

ALERT ALARM ALERT--
--MASSIVE, ONGOING SYSTEMS DYSFUNCTION!
ANOMALY! ASSAULT INCONSISTENT WITH COLOSSUS'S DATAFILE!
THAT'S 'CAUSE IT'S NOT ONLY COLOSSUS, CHUMP -- DON'T'CHA KNOW I DISRUPT ANY ELECTRICAL SYSTEM I PHASE THROUGH?
I PHASED MYSELF INTO PETER'S BODY AND THE PAIR OF US UP THROUGH THE GROUND.
SINCE HE'S WAY STRONGER'N ME, HE MADE THE SURFACE IN LOTS LESS TIME THAN IT TOOK ME TO REACH HIM.
AND I WAS ABLE TO TAKE NIMROD BY SURPRISE...
...'CAUSE PETER'S ARMORED FORM SHIELDED ME FROM HIS SENSORS!
HE'S THROWN FOR A LOOP, PARTNER--
--NOW FINISH THE JOB!
WHAM!

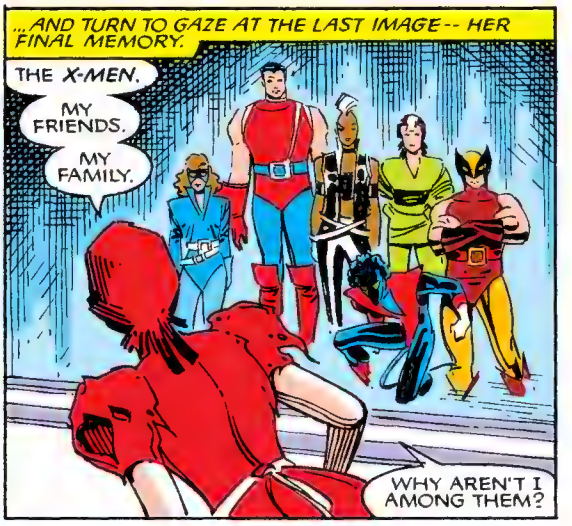

THOOM!

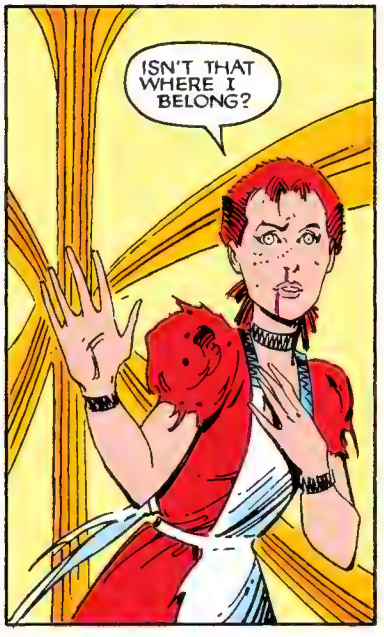

THE BODY SHOPPE...
THEY'VE COME SO FAR...
...THEIR JOURNEY BARELY BEGUN.
RACHEL'S LIFE-BLOOD STAINS HER CLOTHES...
...BUT SHE NO LONGER BLEEDS.
THE WOUNDS WOLVERINE INFLICTED ARE GONE...
...AS IS SO MUCH ELSE.
THINGS PRECIOUS, IRREPLACE-ABLE.
...GIDDILY, JOYOUSLY CAST AWAY, WHAT MATTERS MOST...
...IS THE DANCE.
SHE WANTS WITH ALL HER HEART TO BE LIKE THE SALESWOMAN.
AND WITH EACH STEP--EACH LIFT OF THE ARM, TOSS OF THE HEAD, EACH MAD AND MADCAP SMILE...
...SHE IS.
THE RAMBLE.
SELENE-- USE CABLES, ROCKS, ANYTHING BURIED BENEATH NIMROD...
...TO BIND HIM IN PLACE!
HE'S STILL STRUGGLING-- REPAIRING HIMSELF--
CON ED
NY BELL TELEPH
MANHATTAN CABLE TV
CON ED
--BEWARE, STORM, I CANNOT HOLD HIM LONG.
GODDESS WILLING, THAT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY.

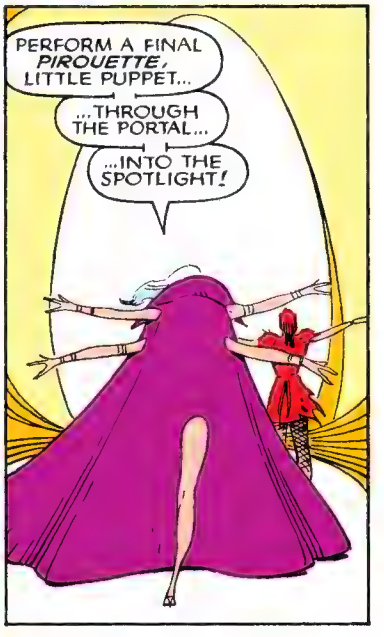

HE IS DYING.
I KNOW.
LELAND--FORGIVE ME--BUT WE NEED YOUR POWER A FINAL TIME.
IF I CAN...
FOCUS ON SHAW.
OVERCOME THE FORCE-EFFECT THAT HURLS HIM UPWARDS.
BRING HIM BACK...
"...AS HARD AND FAST AS YOU CAN."
LELAND LAUGHS--
--A HOARSE WHEEZE...
...THAT MARKS HIS FINAL BREATH.
BUT THE LIGHT DOES NOT LEAVE HIS EYES.
NOT YET.
HE HOLDS OFF THE SHADOW WITH WILL ALONE...
...DENYING THE UNDENIABLE...
...REFUSING THE INEVITABLE...
...AS HE IMBUES SEBASTIAN SHAW WITH THE MASS OF A SMALL METEOR.
NIMROD KNOWS HIS DANGER...
...BUT CAN DO NOTHING TO AVOID IT.
FLAMMO!

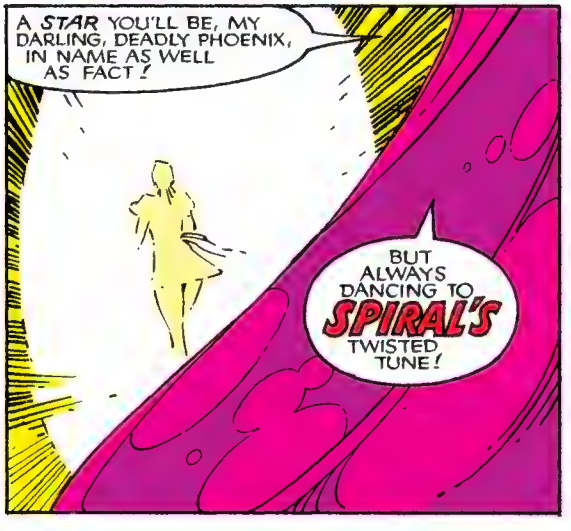
HARRY LELAND SEES THE FLASH OF SHAW'S IMPACT...
...AND AS THAT BLINDING GLOW FADES...
...SO AT LAST DOES THE SPARKLE FROM HIS EYES.
FAT MAN HAD HIS FAULTS...
...BUT HE MADE HIS EXIT WITH STYLE.
SHAW STILL BREATHING?
DA, WOLVERINE-- BUT HE IS UN-CONSCIOUS.
GET HIM CLEAR.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.
SNIKT
THE CLAWS ARE FORGED OF PURE ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN, ABLE TO CUT SOLID STEEL AS EASILY AS BUTTER.
BUT BEFORE WOLVERINE CAN USE THEM...
FTASSP!
SUCKER DID IT TO US AGAIN! TELEPORTED HIMSELF TO SAFETY THE MINUTE WE HAD HIM ON THE ROPES.
EACH TIME, HE GETS THAT MUCH HARDER TO BEAT.
WE DON'T FIND A WAY TO NAIL HIM-- ONCE AND FOR ALL, AND SOON-- IT'LL BE OUR TURN.
STORM-- DO YOU HEAR? SIRENS! THE POLICE!
THE LORDS CARDINAL CAN NO MORE AFFORD TO BE FOUND HERE THAN YOU X-MEN. I OFFER THE SANCTUARY OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB. LET THIS TRUCE LAST A LITTLE LONGER.
IN SHAW'S NAME, I GUARANTEE YOUR SAFE CONDUCT.
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, TESSA, I HAVE LITTLE ALTERNATIVE. LEAD ON.


AS THE MUTANTS GATHER THEIR WOUNDED AND DEAD, AND HURRIEDLY DEPART THE BATTLEFIELD STORM'S THOUGHTS TURN A FINAL TIME TO RACHEL...
...WITH A DESPERATE, DESPAIRING CRY.
PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT MAKES RACHEL PAUSE ATOP THE SPIRAL PATH...









BID FAREWELL TO YOUR WORLD -- FOR YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT AGAIN!
THE GIRL YOU WERE IS GONE, THE LIFE YOU LED IS NO MORE! BOTH GIRL AND LIFE ARE MINE TO PLAY WITH.
WHAT COMES NEXT, I DECIDE!

NEXT: THE MORNING AFTER!

MARVEL
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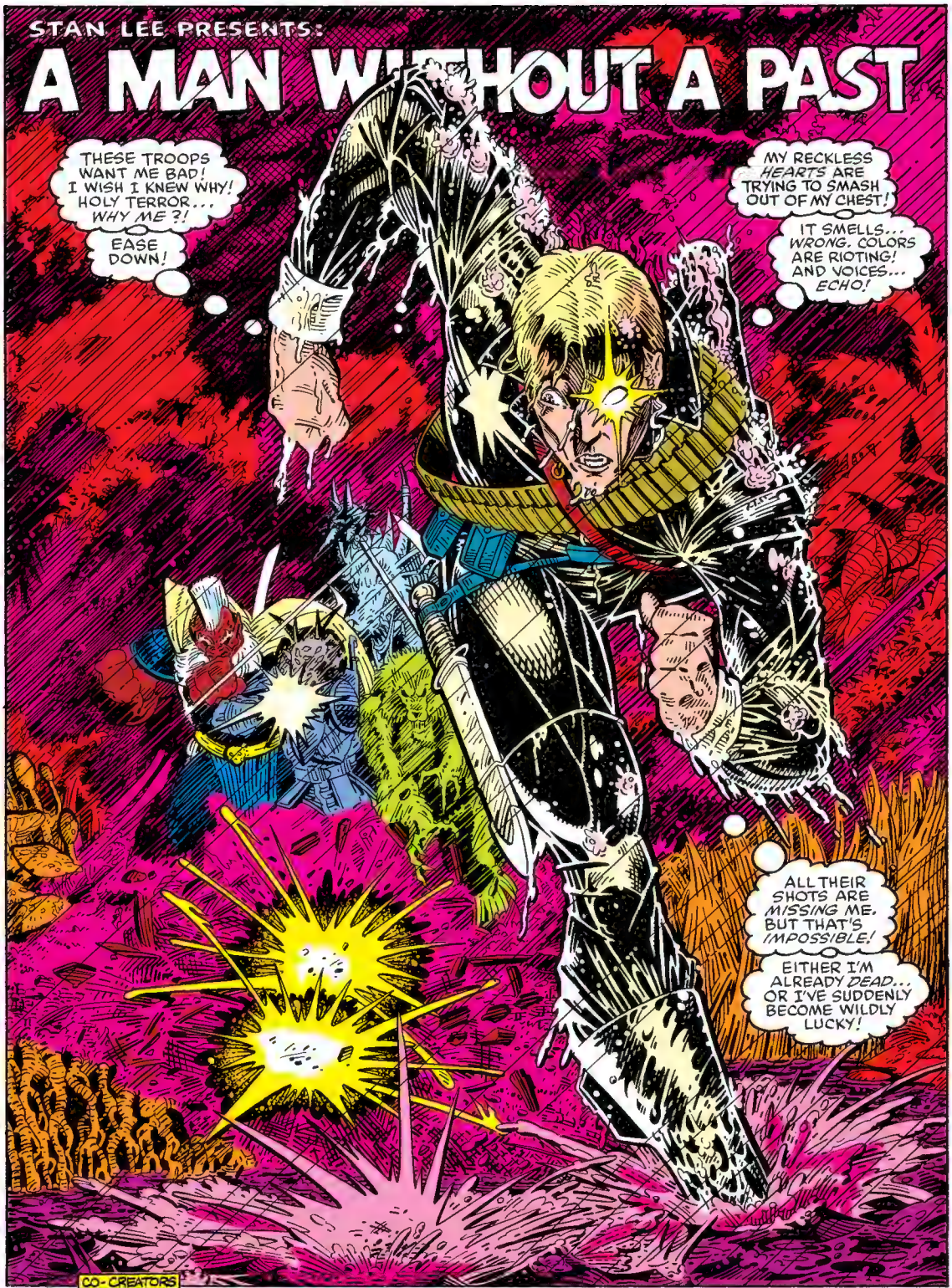
SEPT
#1 IN A SIX-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
LONGSHOT
ARTHUR ADAMS 2-85


STAN LEE PRESENTS:
A MAN WITHOUT A PAST
THESE TROOPS WANT ME BAD! I WISH I KNEW WHY! HOLY TERROR... WHY ME ?!
EASE DOWN!
MY RECKLESS HEARTS ARE TRYING TO SMASH OUT OF MY CHEST!
IT SMELLS... WRONG. COLORS ARE RIOTING! AND VOICES... ECHO!
ALL THEIR SHOTS ARE MISSING ME. BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
EITHER I'M ALREADY DEAD... OR I'VE SUDDENLY BECOME WILDLY LUCKY!
CO-CREATORS

ANN NOCENTI
WRITER

ARTHUR ADAMS
PENCILS

ANDERSON & PORTACIO
INKS

JOE ROSEN
LETTERS

CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORS

LOUISE JONES
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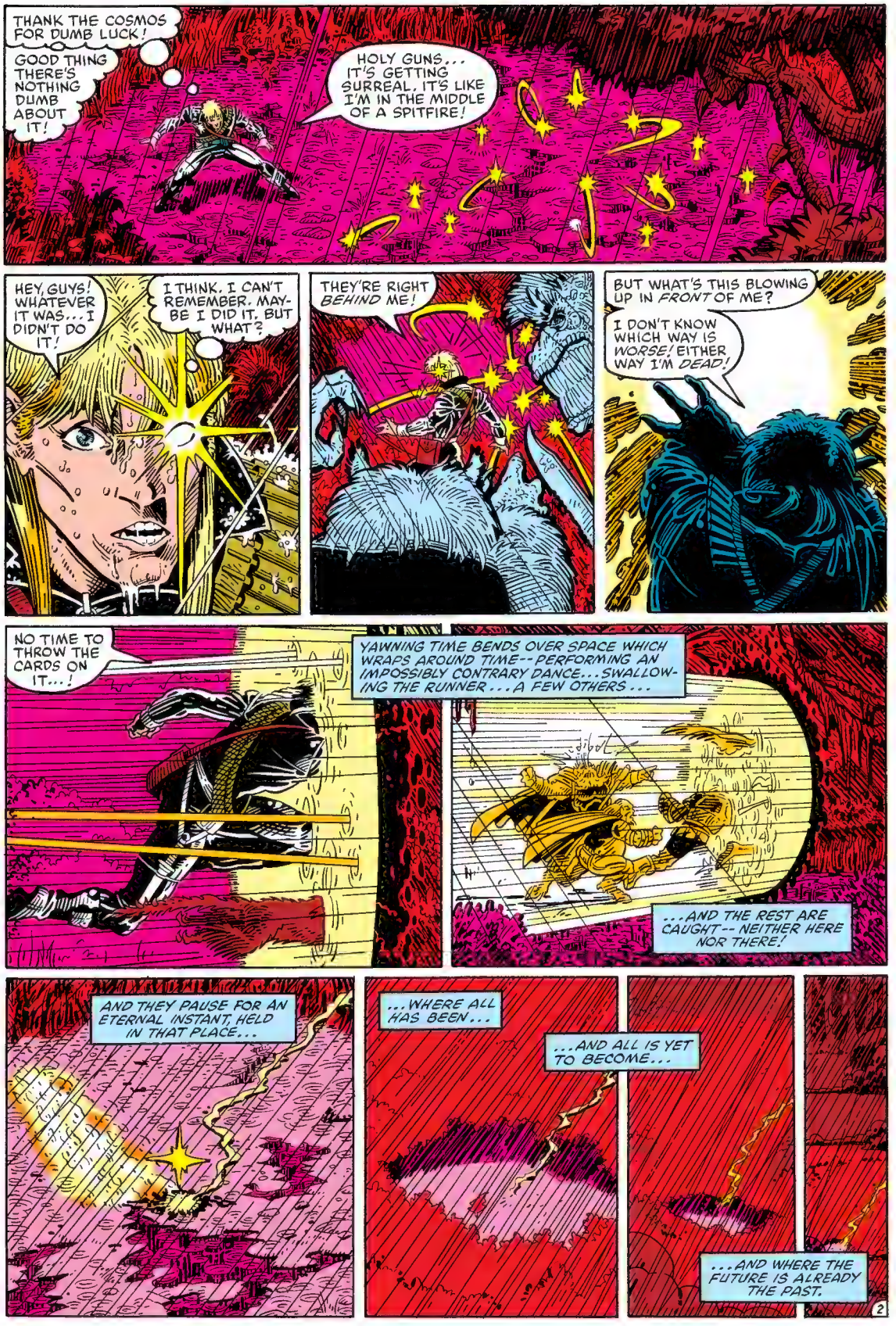
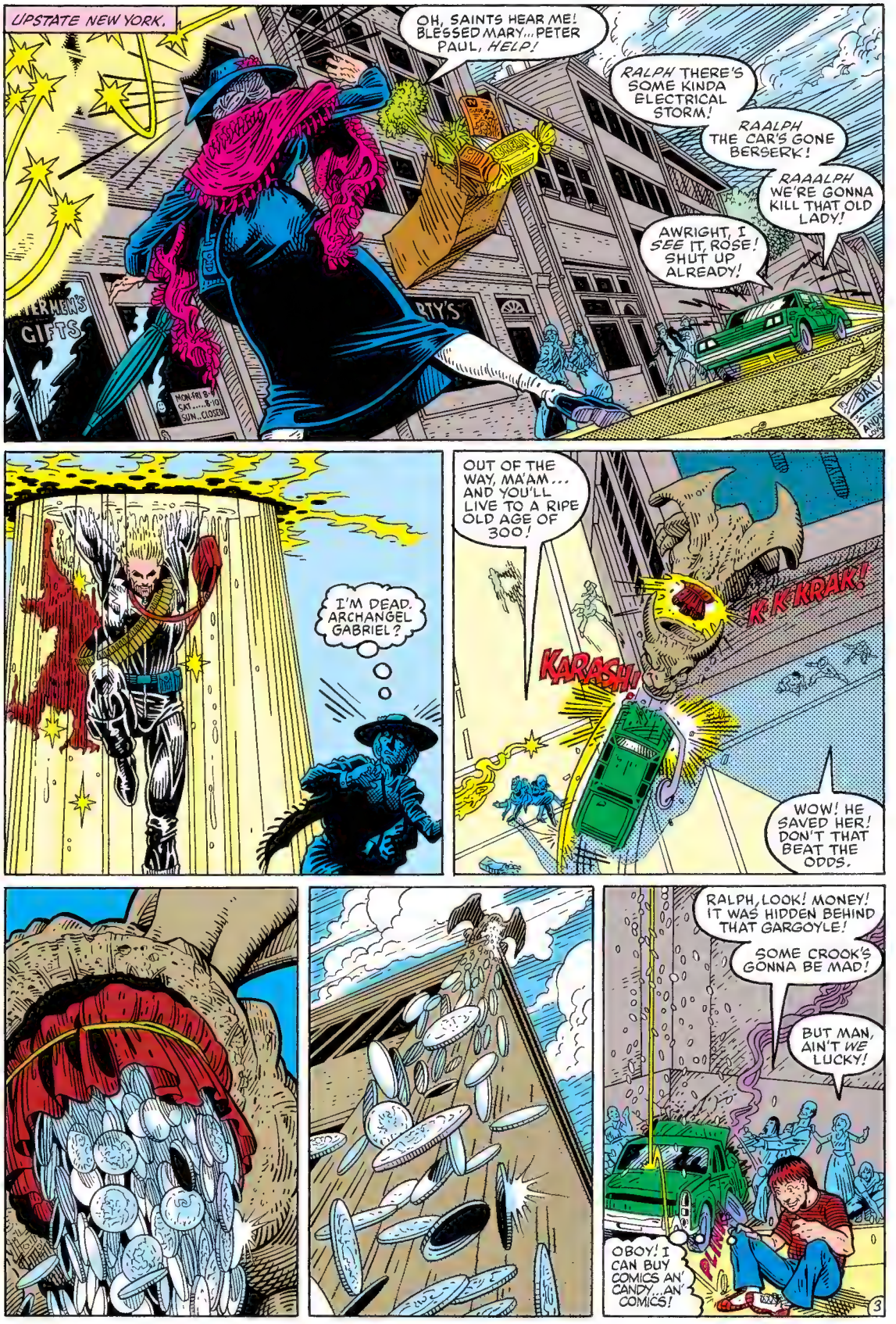
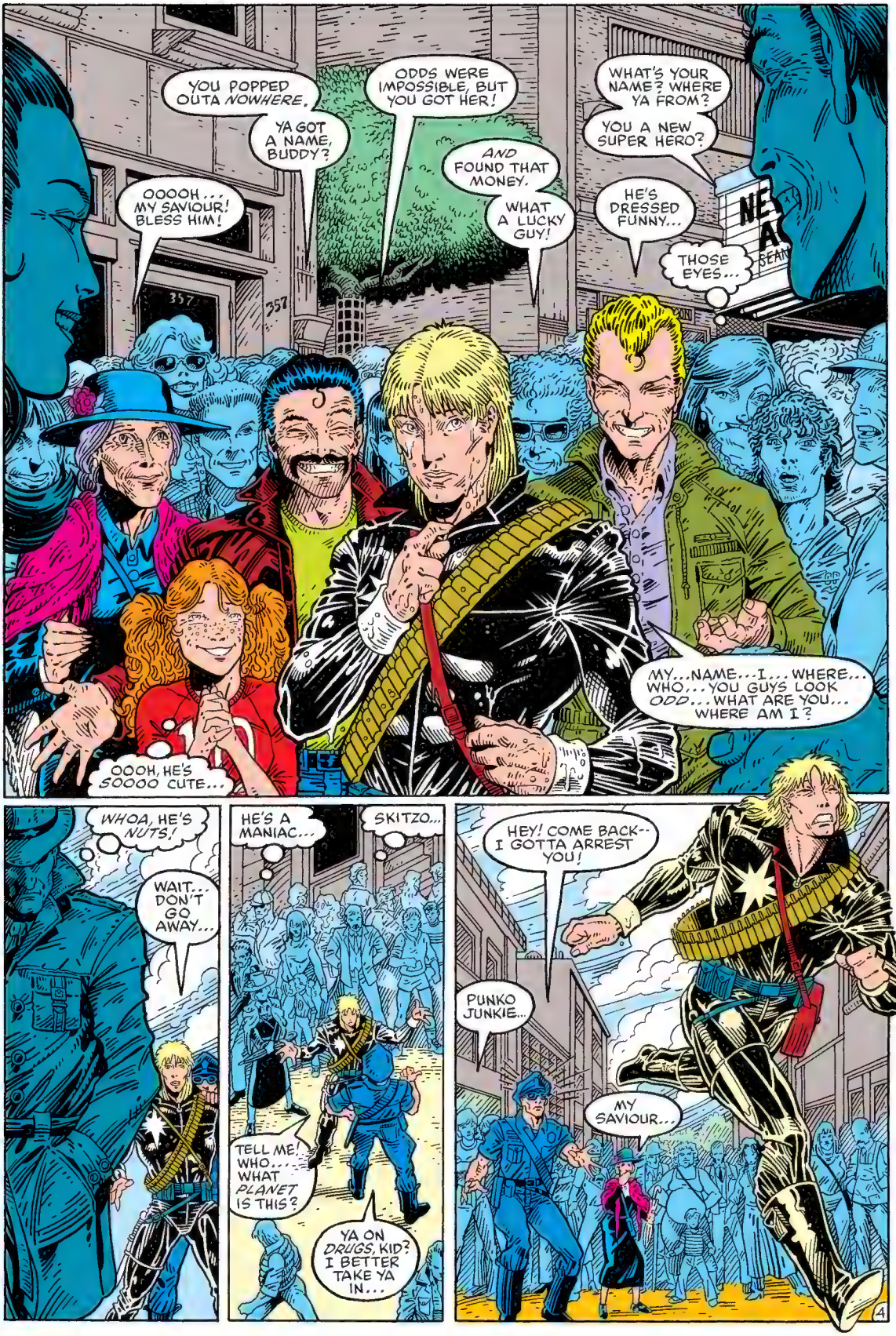
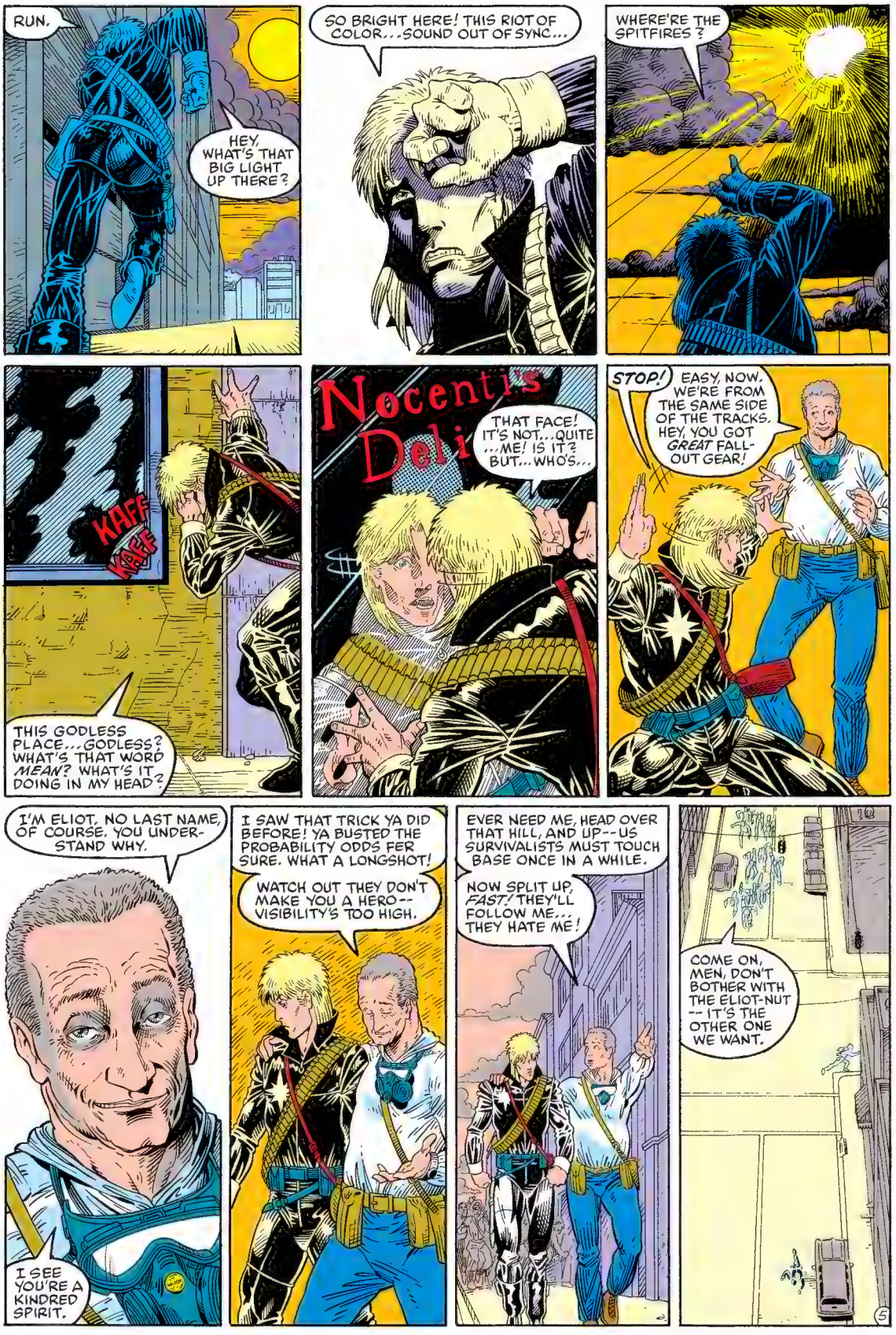
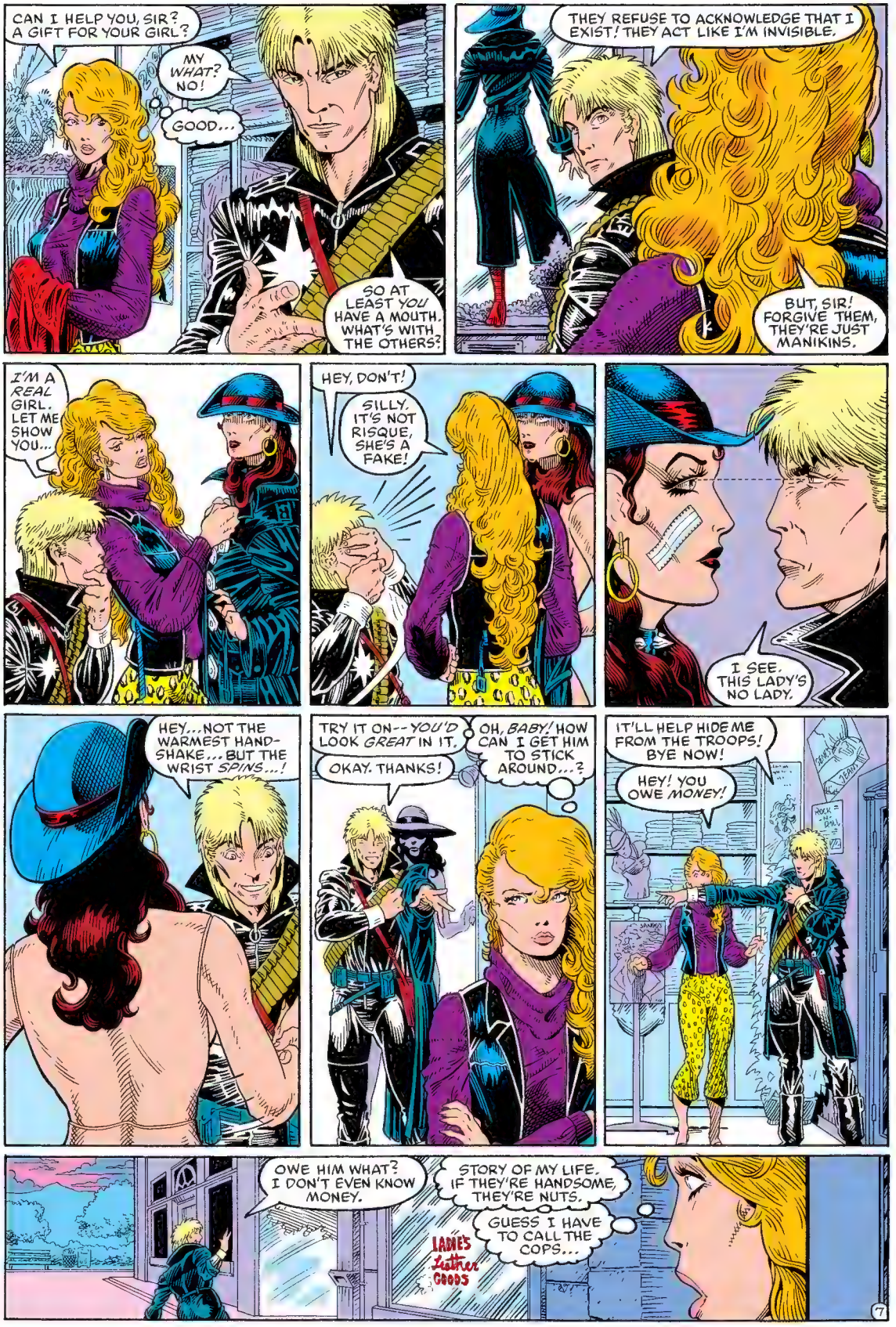

THANK THE COSMOS FOR DUMB LUCK!
GOOD THING THERE'S NOTHING DUMB ABOUT IT!
HOLY GUNS... IT'S GETTING SURREAL, IT'S LIKE I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPITFIRE!
HEY, GUYS! WHATEVER IT WAS... I DIDN'T DO IT!
I THINK, I CAN'T REMEMBER. MAYBE I DID IT, BUT WHAT?
THEY'RE RIGHT *BEHIND* ME!
BUT WHAT'S THIS BLOWING UP IN *FRONT* OF ME?
I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS *WORSE!* EITHER WAY I'M *DEAD!*
NO TIME TO THROW THE CARDS ON IT...!
YAWNING TIME BENDS OVER SPACE WHICH WRAPS AROUND TIME--PERFORMING AN IMPOSSIBLY CONTRARY DANCE...SWALLOWING THE RUNNER...A FEW OTHERS...
...AND THE REST ARE CAUGHT-- NEITHER HERE NOR THERE!
AND THEY PAUSE FOR AN ETERNAL INSTANT, HELD IN THAT PLACE...
...WHERE ALL HAS BEEN...
...AND ALL IS YET TO BECOME...
...AND WHERE THE FUTURE IS ALREADY THE PAST.
2

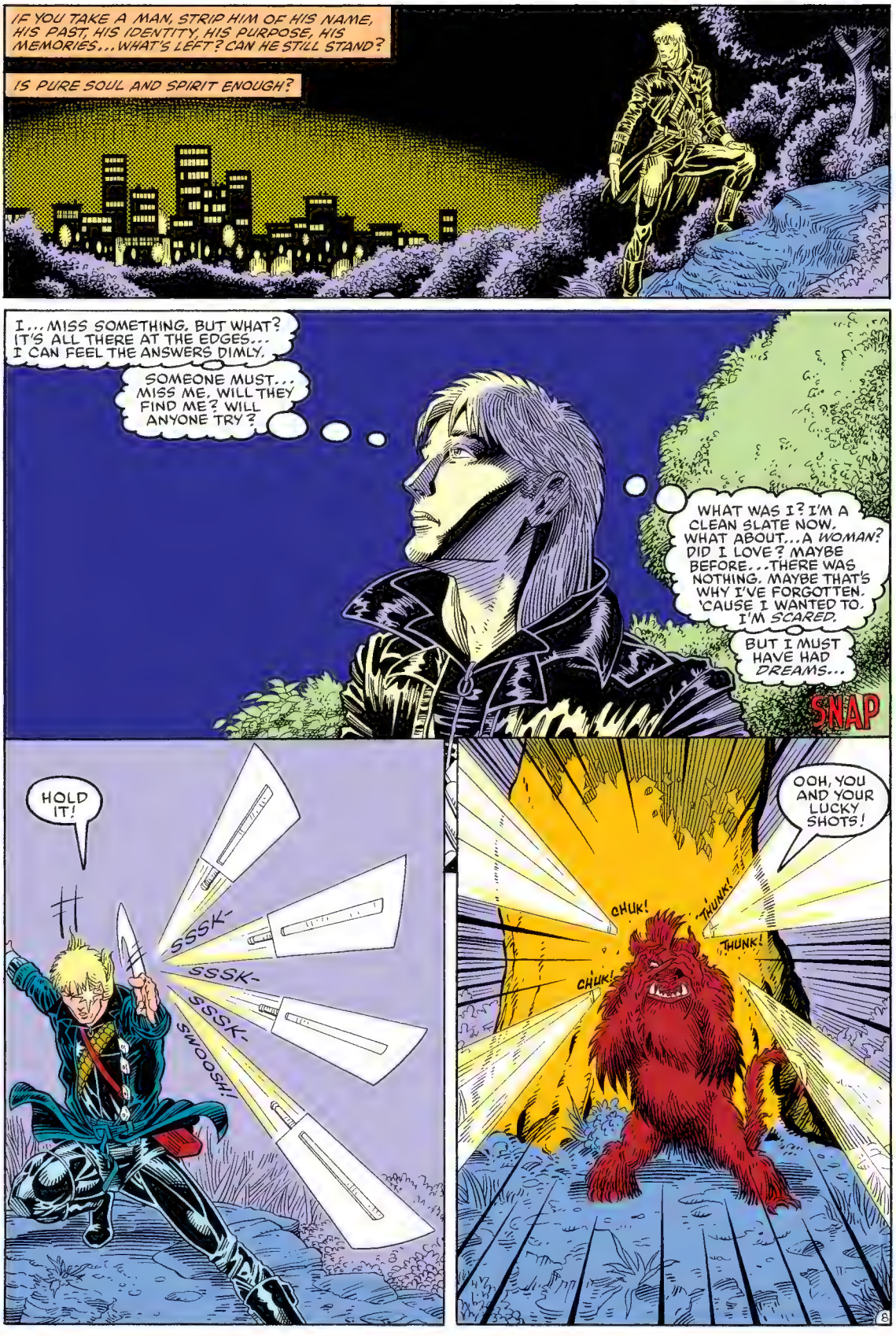

UPSTATE NEW YORK.
OH, SAINTS HEAR ME! BLESSED MARY... PETER PAUL, HELP!
RALPH THERE'S SOME KINDA ELECTRICAL STORM!
RAALPH THE CAR'S GONE BERSERK!
RAAALPH WE'RE GONNA KILL THAT OLD LADY!
AWRIGHT, I SEE IT, ROSE! SHUT UP ALREADY!
GIFTS
MON-FRI 8-4 SAT....8-10 SUN...CLOSED
I'M DEAD. ARCHANGEL GABRIEL?
OUT OF THE WAY, MA'AM... AND YOU'LL LIVE TO A RIPE OLD AGE OF 300!
KARASH!
K-K-KRAK!
WOW! HE SAVED HER! DON'T THAT BEAT THE ODDS.
RALPH, LOOK! MONEY! IT WAS HIDDEN BEHIND THAT GARGOYLE!
SOME CROOK'S GONNA BE MAD!
BUT MAN, AIN'T WE LUCKY!
OBOY! I CAN BUY COMICS AN' CANDY... AN' COMICS!
PLINK
3

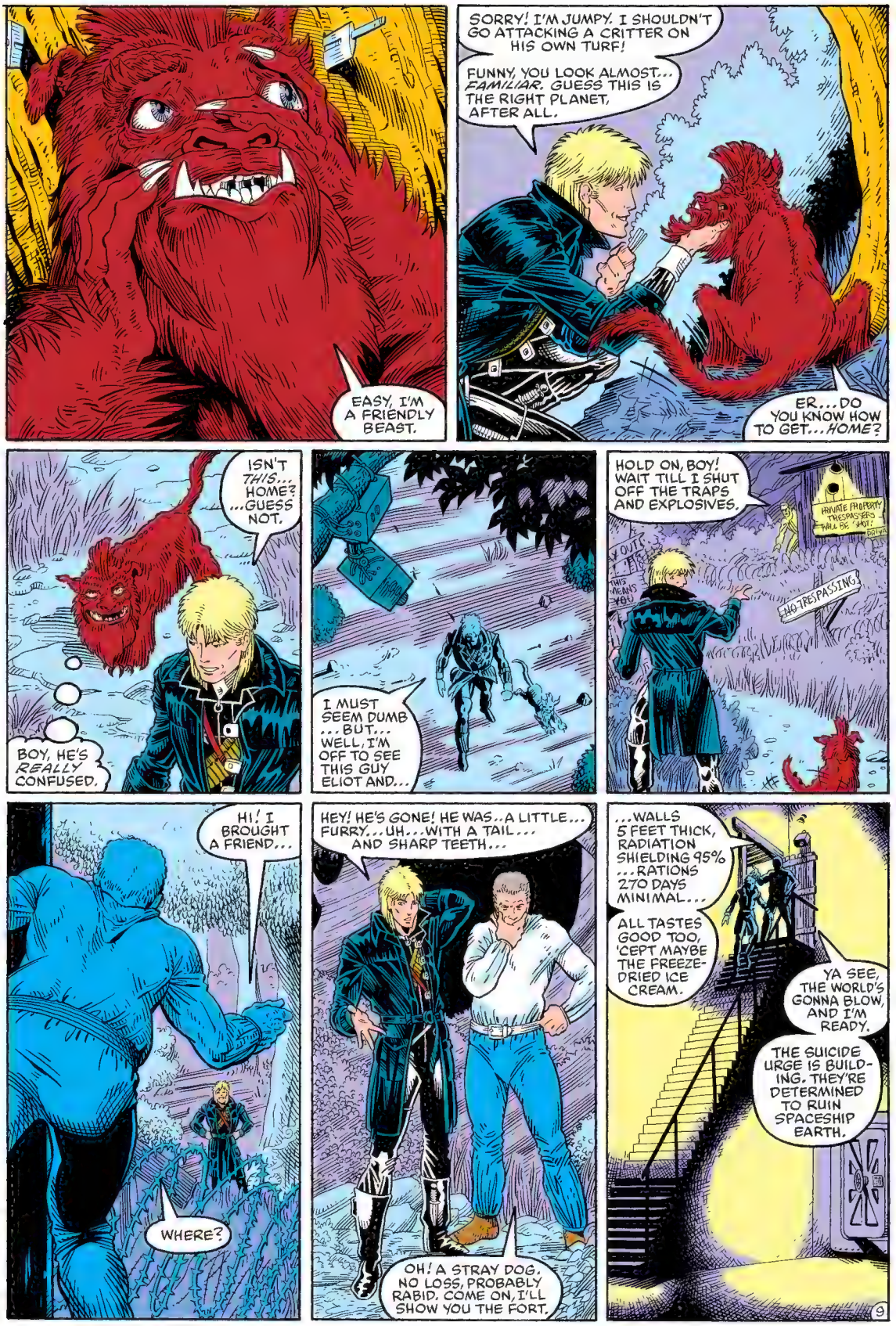

YOU POPPED OUTA NOWHERE.
YA GOT A NAME, BUDDY?
OOOOH... MY SAVIOUR! BLESS HIM!
ODDS WERE IMPOSSIBLE, BUT YOU GOT HER!
AND FOUND THAT MONEY.
WHAT A LUCKY GUY!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WHERE YA FROM?
YOU A NEW SUPER HERO?
HE'S DRESSED FUNNY...
THOSE EYES...
MY...NAME...I...WHERE... WHO...YOU GUYS LOOK ODD...WHAT ARE YOU... WHERE AM I?
OOOH, HE'S SOOOO CUTE...
WHOA, HE'S NUTS!
WAIT... DON'T GO AWAY...
HE'S A MANIAC...
SKITZO...
TELL ME! WHO... WHAT PLANET IS THIS?
YA ON DRUGS, KID? I BETTER TAKE YA IN...
HEY! COME BACK-- I GOTTA ARREST YOU!
PUNKO JUNKIE...
MY SAVIOUR...
4

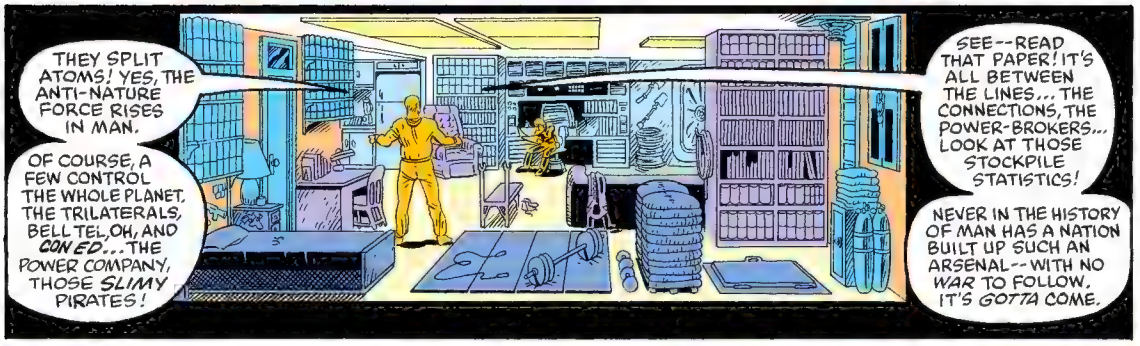

RUN.
HEY, WHAT'S THAT BIG LIGHT UP THERE?
SO BRIGHT HERE! THIS RIOT OF COLOR...SOUND OUT OF SYNC...
WHERE'RE THE SPITFIRES?
KAFF
KAFF
THIS GODLESS PLACE...GODLESS? WHAT'S THAT WORD *MEAN*? WHAT'S IT DOING IN MY HEAD?
Nocenti's Deli
THAT FACE! IT'S NOT...QUITE ...ME! IS IT? BUT...WHO'S...
STOP!
EASY, NOW. WE'RE FROM THE SAME SIDE OF THE TRACKS. HEY, YOU GOT *GREAT* FALL-OUT GEAR!
I'M ELIOT. NO LAST NAME, OF COURSE. YOU UNDER-STAND WHY.
I SEE YOU'RE A KINDRED SPIRIT.
I SAW THAT TRICK YA DID BEFORE! YA BUSTED THE PROBABILITY ODDS FER SURE. WHAT A LONGSHOT!
WATCH OUT THEY DON'T MAKE YOU A HERO--VISIBILITY'S TOO HIGH.
EVER NEED ME, HEAD OVER THAT HILL, AND UP--US SURVIVALISTS MUST TOUCH BASE ONCE IN A WHILE.
NOW SPLIT UP, *FAST!* THEY'LL FOLLOW ME... THEY HATE ME!
COME ON, MEN, DON'T BOTHER WITH THE ELIOT-NUT -- IT'S THE OTHER ONE WE WANT.
5

WHAT WAS HE TALKING ABOUT?
OUTRUNNING THOSE PEOPLE WAS EASY. THIS WHOLE SLUGGISH PLACE MOVES IN SLOW MOTION.
OH, HELP. I MUST KNOW WHO I AM, OF COURSE I DO.
EVERYONE KNOWS WHO THEY ARE.
I KNOW THE LANGUAGE. I MUST KNOW THE PLANET.
LADIE'S Leather GOODS
HA HEHA HAHA WHAT A GREAT JOKE.. I HAVE NO NAME...OH, THIS IS A RIOT...HAHAHA WHO AM I... HAHA WELL, SOMEBODY MUST KNOW. SOMEONE WILL TELL ME. I'LL JUST SIT HERE AND WAIT TILL...
OH! EXCUSE ME, LADIES. WELL...DON'T KEEP STARING AT ME. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?!
HEY! WE ALL WALK THE SAME PLANET HERE. YOU COULD SAY SOMETHING.
LADIE'S Leather GOODS
MON-FRI 9:00-7:00
SAT....9:00-12:00
SUN ...9:00-5:00
WE'RE OPEN
YOU COULD AT LEAST SMILE.
LOOK, LADIES...
JUST 'CAUSE A GUY FORGETS WHO HE IS FOR A MINUTE...
TALK TO ME!
JINGLE JINGLE
6


CAN I HELP YOU, SIR? A GIFT FOR YOUR GIRL?
MY WHAT? NO!
GOOD...
SO AT LEAST YOU HAVE A MOUTH. WHAT'S WITH THE OTHERS?
THEY REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I EXIST! THEY ACT LIKE I'M INVISIBLE.
BUT, SIR! FORGIVE THEM, THEY'RE JUST MANIKINS.
I'M A REAL GIRL. LET ME SHOW YOU...
HEY, DON'T!
SILLY. IT'S NOT RISQUE, SHE'S A FAKE!
I SEE. THIS LADY'S NO LADY.
HEY... NOT THE WARMEST HAND-SHAKE... BUT THE WRIST SPINS...!
TRY IT ON-- YOU'D LOOK GREAT IN IT.
OKAY. THANKS!
OH, BABY! HOW CAN I GET HIM TO STICK AROUND...?
IT'LL HELP HIDE ME FROM THE TROOPS! BYE NOW!
HEY! YOU OWE MONEY!
OWE HIM WHAT? I DON'T EVEN KNOW MONEY.
STORY OF MY LIFE. IF THEY'RE HANDSOME, THEY'RE NUTS.
GUESS I HAVE TO CALL THE COPS...
LADIES Leather GOODS
7


IF YOU TAKE A MAN, STRIP HIM OF HIS NAME, HIS PAST, HIS IDENTITY, HIS PURPOSE, HIS MEMORIES... WHAT'S LEFT? CAN HE STILL STAND?
IS PURE SOUL AND SPIRIT ENOUGH?
I... MISS SOMETHING. BUT WHAT? IT'S ALL THERE AT THE EDGES... I CAN FEEL THE ANSWERS DIMLY.
SOMEONE MUST... MISS ME. WILL THEY FIND ME? WILL ANYONE TRY?
WHAT WAS I? I'M A CLEAN SLATE NOW. WHAT ABOUT... A WOMAN? DID I LOVE? MAYBE BEFORE... THERE WAS NOTHING. MAYBE THAT'S WHY I'VE FORGOTTEN. 'CAUSE I WANTED TO. I'M SCARED.
BUT I MUST HAVE HAD DREAMS...
SNAP
HOLD IT!
SSSK-
SSSK-
SSSK-
SWOOSH!
OOH, YOU AND YOUR LUCKY SHOTS!
CHUK!
THUNK!
THUNK!
CHUK!

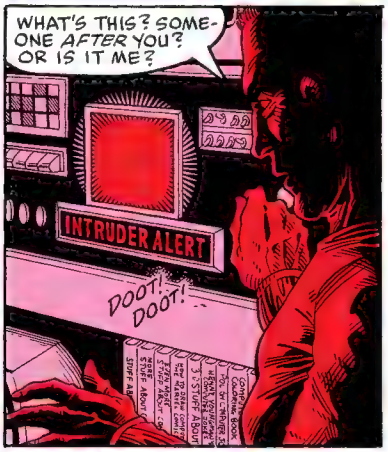

EASY, I'M A FRIENDLY BEAST.
SORRY! I'M JUMPY. I SHOULDN'T GO ATTACKING A CRITTER ON HIS OWN TURF!
FUNNY, YOU LOOK ALMOST... *FAMILIAR*. GUESS THIS IS THE RIGHT PLANET, AFTER ALL.
ER... DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET... *HOME*?
ISN'T *THIS*... HOME? ...GUESS NOT.
BOY, HE'S *REALLY* CONFUSED.
I MUST SEEM DUMB ...BUT... WELL, I'M OFF TO SEE THIS GUY ELIOT AND...
HOLD ON, BOY! WAIT TILL I SHUT OFF THE TRAPS AND EXPLOSIVES.
PRIVATE PROPERTY TRESPASSERS WILL BE SHOT!
THIS MEANS YOU
NO TRESPASSING
HI! I BROUGHT A FRIEND...
WHERE?
HEY! HE'S GONE! HE WAS..A LITTLE... FURRY...UH...WITH A TAIL... AND SHARP TEETH...
OH! A STRAY DOG. NO LOSS, PROBABLY RABID. COME ON, I'LL SHOW YOU THE FORT.
...WALLS 5 FEET THICK, RADIATION SHIELDING 95% ...RATIONS 270 DAYS MINIMAL...
ALL TASTES GOOD TOO, 'CEPT MAYBE THE FREEZE-DRIED ICE CREAM.
YA SEE, THE WORLD'S GONNA BLOW, AND I'M READY.
THE SUICIDE URGE IS BUILDING. THEY'RE DETERMINED TO RUIN SPACESHIP EARTH.
9

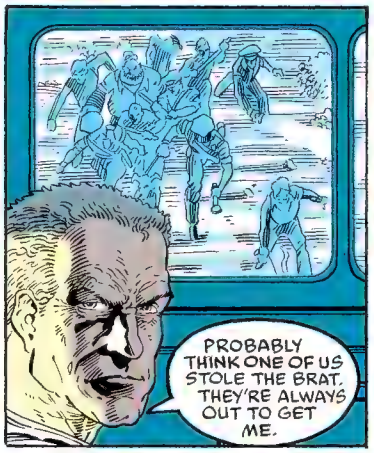

THEY SPLIT ATOMS! YES, THE ANTI-NATURE FORCE RISES IN MAN.
OF COURSE, A FEW CONTROL THE WHOLE PLANET, THE TRILATERALS, BELL TEL,OH, AND CON ED... THE POWER COMPANY, THOSE SLIMY PIRATES!
SEE--READ THAT PAPER! IT'S ALL BETWEEN THE LINES... THE CONNECTIONS, THE POWER-BROKERS... LOOK AT THOSE STOCKPILE STATISTICS!
NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF MAN HAS A NATION BUILT UP SUCH AN ARSENAL--WITH NO WAR TO FOLLOW. IT'S GOTTA COME.

SAYS HERE A BABY WAS KIDNAPPED. I'D LIKE TO GET IT BACK!
WHAT? THAT'S JUST A NEWS STORY.

YOU MEAN THE WORDS IN THIS PAPER ARE MADE-UP?
YES! WELL... NO, I GUESS THEY'RE TRUE.

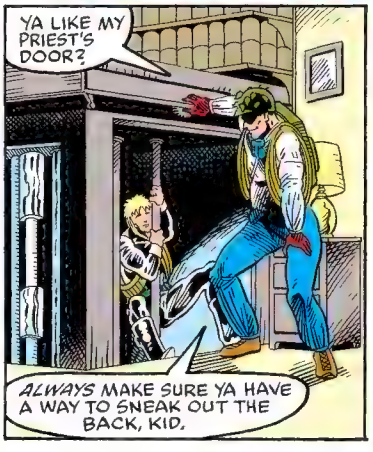
THEN WE MUST GET THE BABY BACK.
BUT... NO ONE PAYS ATTENTION TO PETTY CRIME...


WHAT'S THIS? SOMEONE AFTER YOU? OR IS IT ME?
INTRUDER ALERT
DOOT! DOOT!

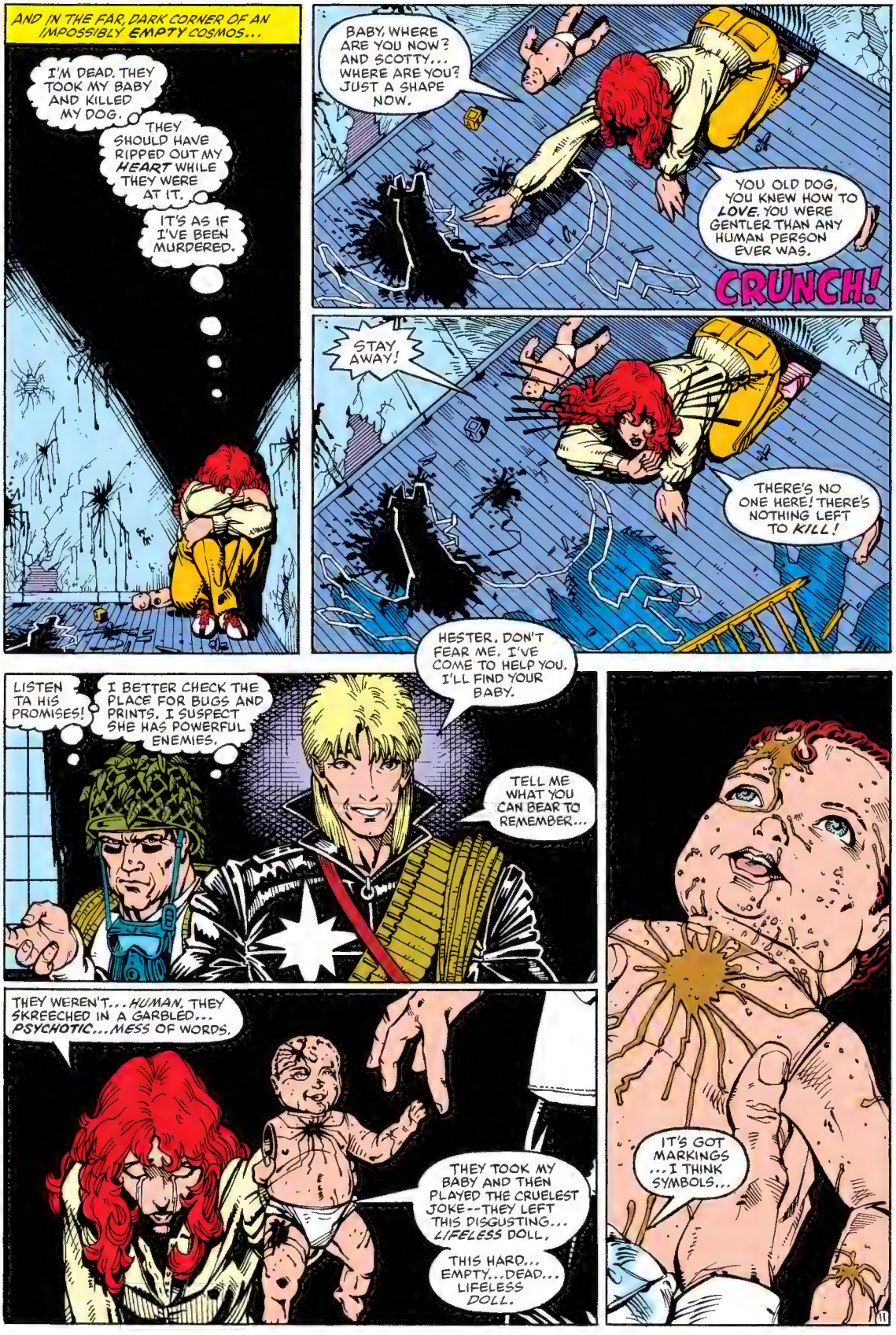

PROBABLY THINK ONE OF US STOLE THE BRAT. THEY'RE ALWAYS OUT TO GET ME.

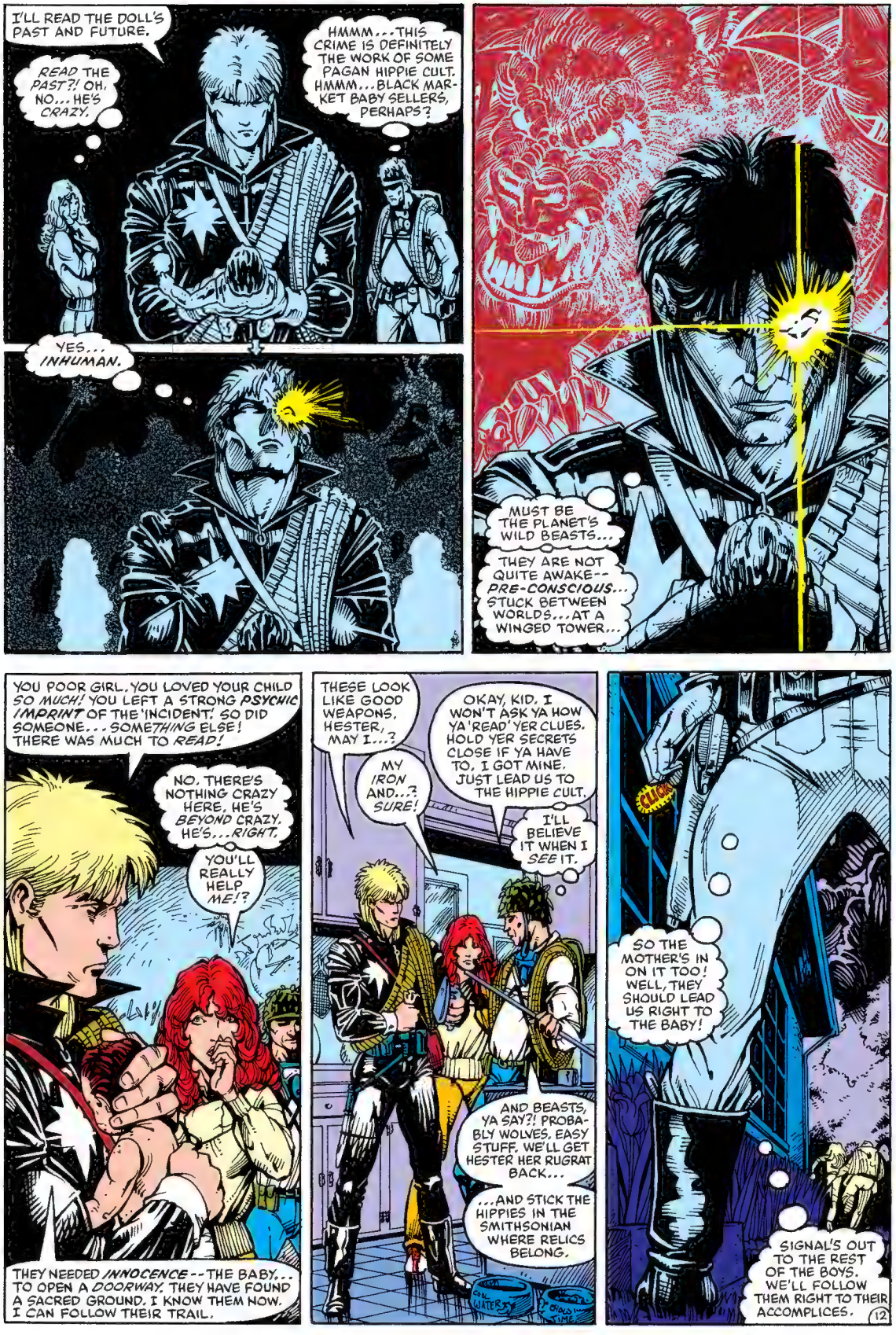
THE BABY...?
AWRIGHT, WE'LL SAVE IT! BABIES ARE INNOCENT ENOUGH, ...I THINK...

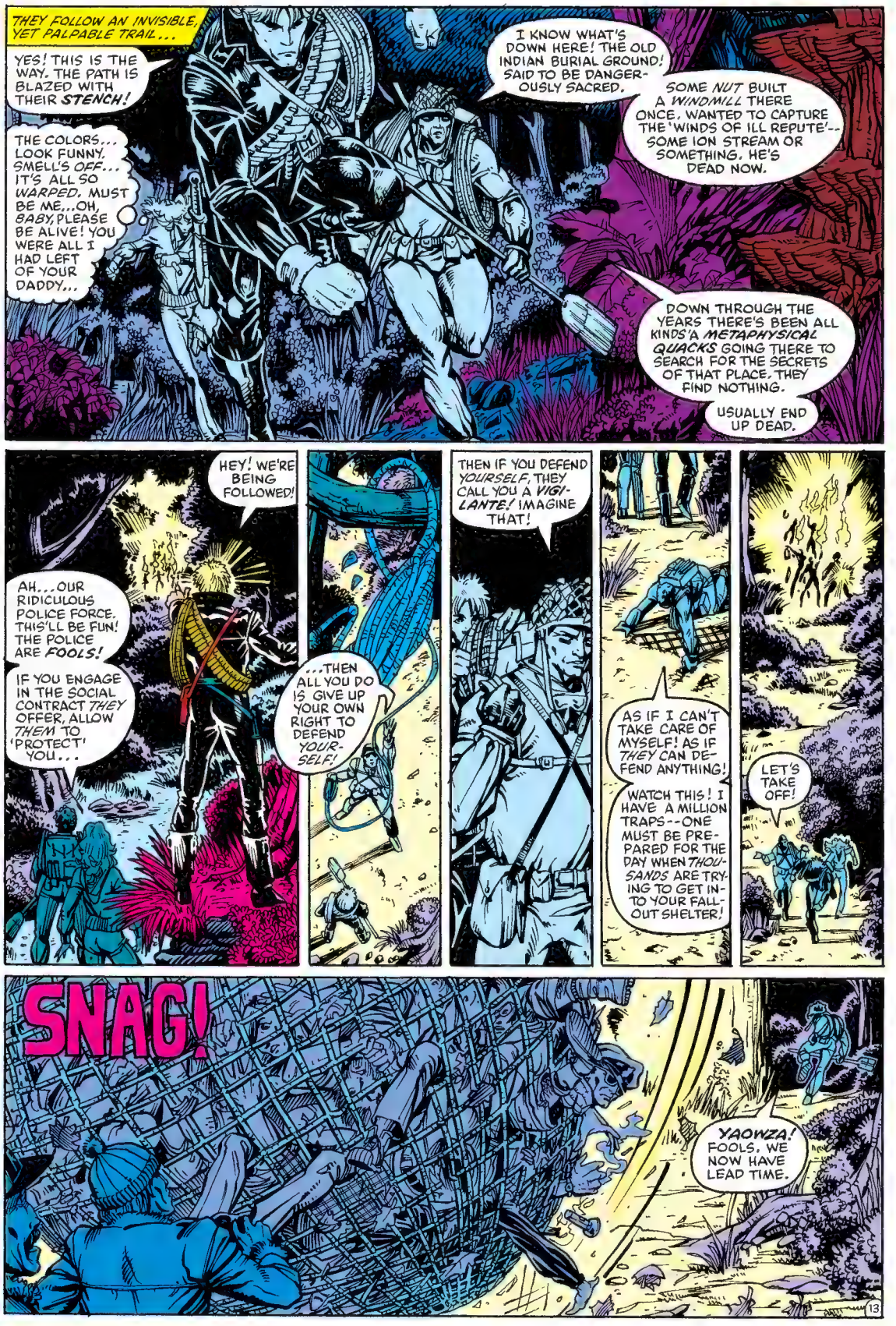
CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS. I GOT PILES OF 'EM.
THE MOTHER'S A TOWNIE GIRL. HER NAME'S HESTER, APPROPRIATE ENOUGH 'CAUSE SHE WEARS THE OLD SCARLET LETTER...YA GET MY MEANING?

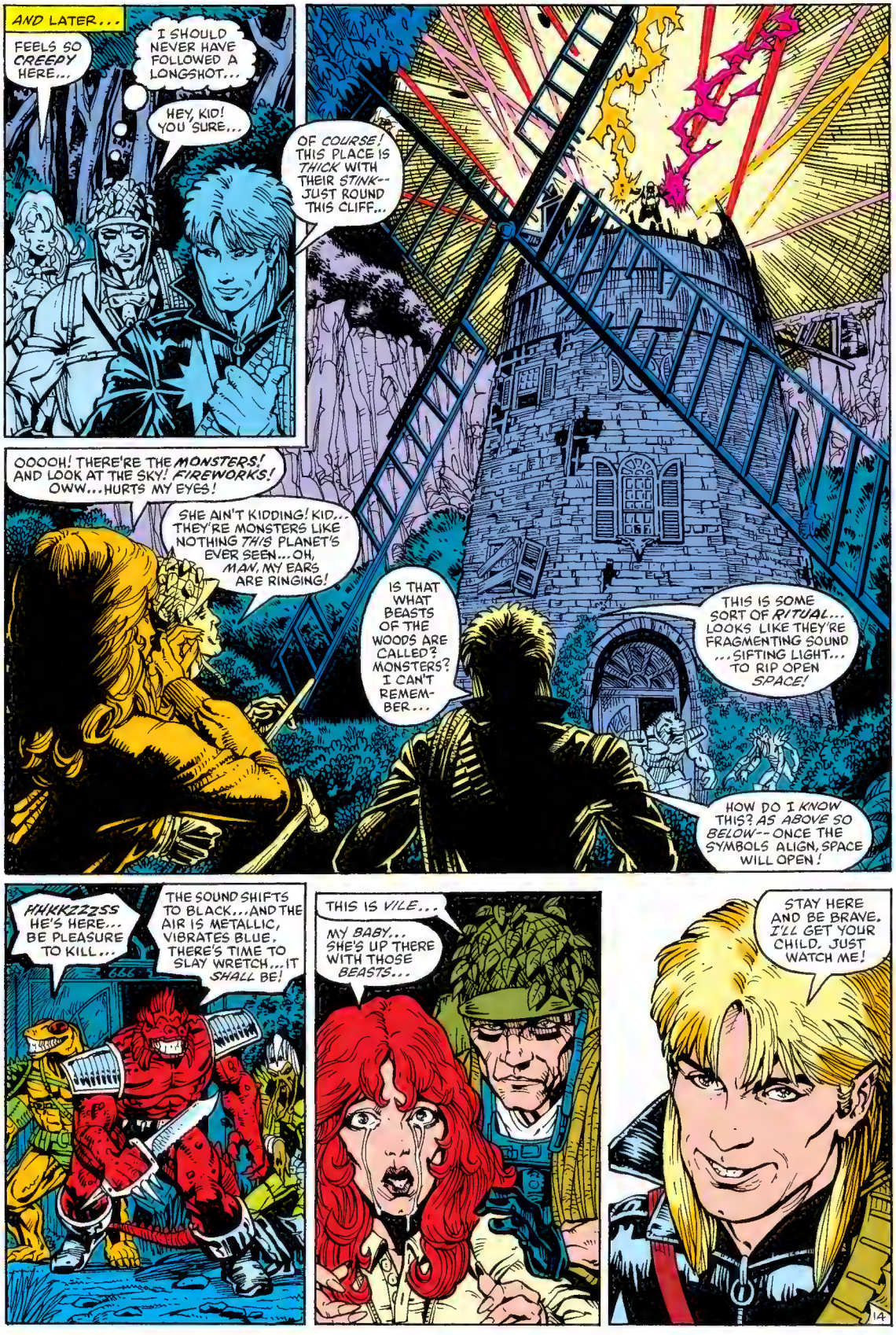

YA LIKE MY PRIEST'S DOOR?
ALWAYS MAKE SURE YA HAVE A WAY TO SNEAK OUT THE BACK, KID.

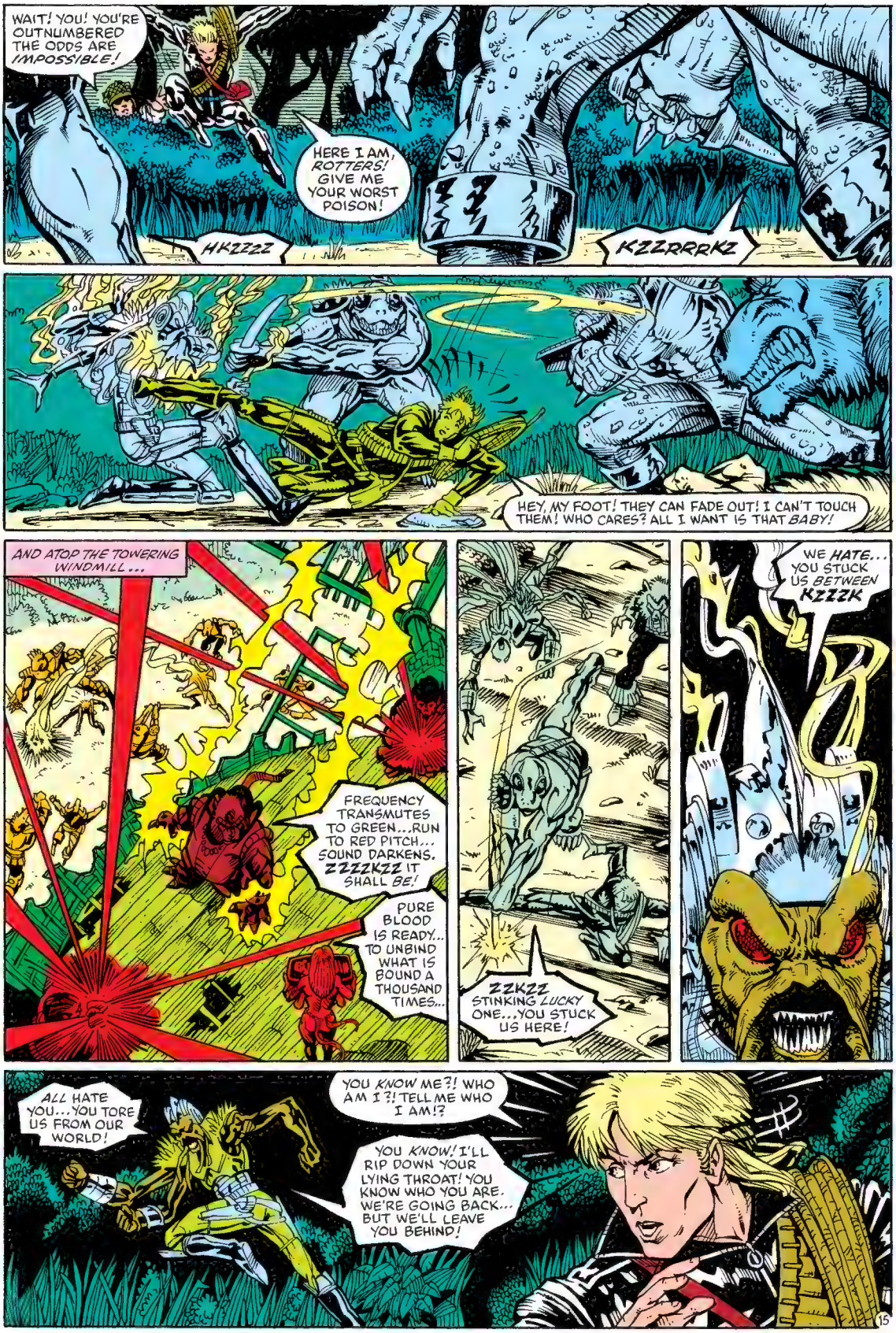
HEY, YOU'RE A GOOD GUY, YA KNOW THAT? WHAT DID YA SAY YOUR NAME WAS?
SSSKA-CHUNG!


AND IN THE FAR, DARK CORNER OF AN IMPOSSIBLY EMPTY COSMOS...
I'M DEAD. THEY TOOK MY BABY AND KILLED MY DOG.
THEY SHOULD HAVE RIPPED OUT MY HEART WHILE THEY WERE AT IT.
IT'S AS IF I'VE BEEN MURDERED.
BABY, WHERE ARE YOU NOW? AND SCOTTY... WHERE ARE YOU? JUST A SHAPE NOW.
YOU OLD DOG, YOU KNEW HOW TO LOVE. YOU WERE GENTLER THAN ANY HUMAN PERSON EVER WAS.
CRUNCH!
STAY AWAY!
THERE'S NO ONE HERE! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO KILL!
HESTER. DON'T FEAR ME. I'VE COME TO HELP YOU. I'LL FIND YOUR BABY.
LISTEN TA HIS PROMISES!
I BETTER CHECK THE PLACE FOR BUGS AND PRINTS. I SUSPECT SHE HAS POWERFUL ENEMIES.
TELL ME WHAT YOU CAN BEAR TO REMEMBER...
THEY WEREN'T... HUMAN. THEY SKREECHED IN A GARBLED... PSYCHOTIC... MESS OF WORDS.
THEY TOOK MY BABY AND THEN PLAYED THE CRUELEST JOKE--THEY LEFT THIS DISGUSTING... LIFELESS DOLL.
THIS HARD... EMPTY... DEAD... LIFELESS DOLL.
IT'S GOT MARKINGS ...I THINK SYMBOLS...

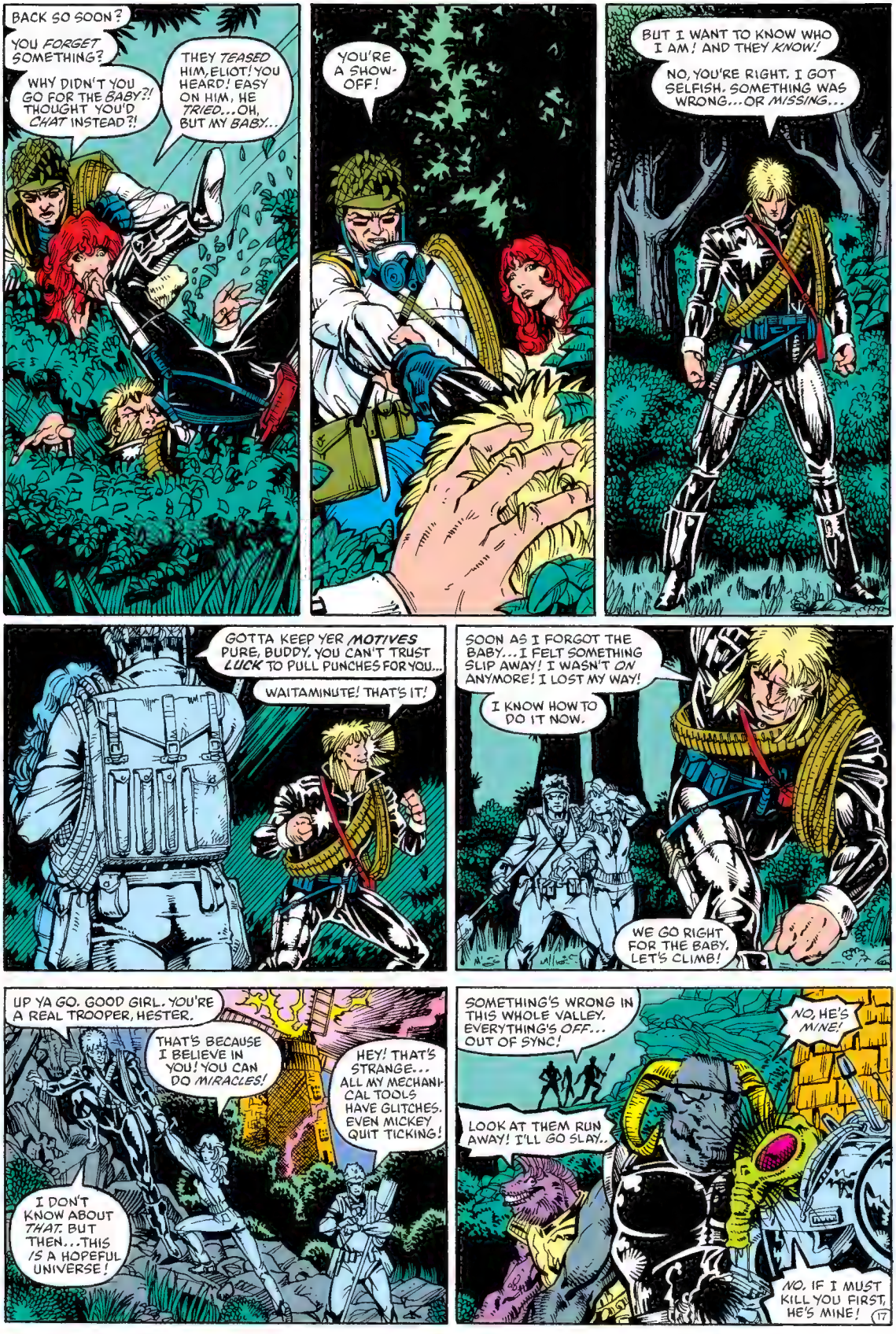

I'LL READ THE DOLL'S PAST AND FUTURE.
READ THE PAST?! OH, NO... HE'S CRAZY.
HMMM... THIS CRIME IS DEFINITELY THE WORK OF SOME PAGAN HIPPIE CULT. HMMM... BLACK MARKET BABY SELLERS, PERHAPS?
YES... INHUMAN.
MUST BE THE PLANET'S WILD BEASTS...
THEY ARE NOT QUITE AWAKE-- PRE-CONSCIOUS... STUCK BETWEEN WORLDS... AT A WINGED TOWER...
YOU POOR GIRL. YOU LOVED YOUR CHILD SO MUCH! YOU LEFT A STRONG PSYCHIC IMPRINT OF THE 'INCIDENT.' SO DID SOMEONE... SOMETHING ELSE! THERE WAS MUCH TO READ!
NO. THERE'S NOTHING CRAZY HERE. HE'S BEYOND CRAZY. HE'S... RIGHT.
YOU'LL REALLY HELP ME!?
THEY NEEDED INNOCENCE -- THE BABY... TO OPEN A DOORWAY. THEY HAVE FOUND A SACRED GROUND. I KNOW THEM NOW. I CAN FOLLOW THEIR TRAIL.
THESE LOOK LIKE GOOD WEAPONS, HESTER, MAY I...?
MY IRON AND...? SURE!
OKAY, KID. I WON'T ASK YA HOW YA 'READ' YER CLUES. HOLD YER SECRETS CLOSE IF YA HAVE TO. I GOT MINE. JUST LEAD US TO THE HIPPIE CULT.
I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.
AND BEASTS, YA SAY?! PROBABLY WOLVES. EASY STUFF. WE'LL GET HESTER HER RUGRAT BACK...
...AND STICK THE HIPPIES IN THE SMITHSONIAN WHERE RELICS BELONG.
CLICK
SO THE MOTHER'S IN ON IT TOO! WELL, THEY SHOULD LEAD US RIGHT TO THE BABY!
SIGNAL'S OUT TO THE REST OF THE BOYS. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM RIGHT TO THEIR ACCOMPLICES.
12

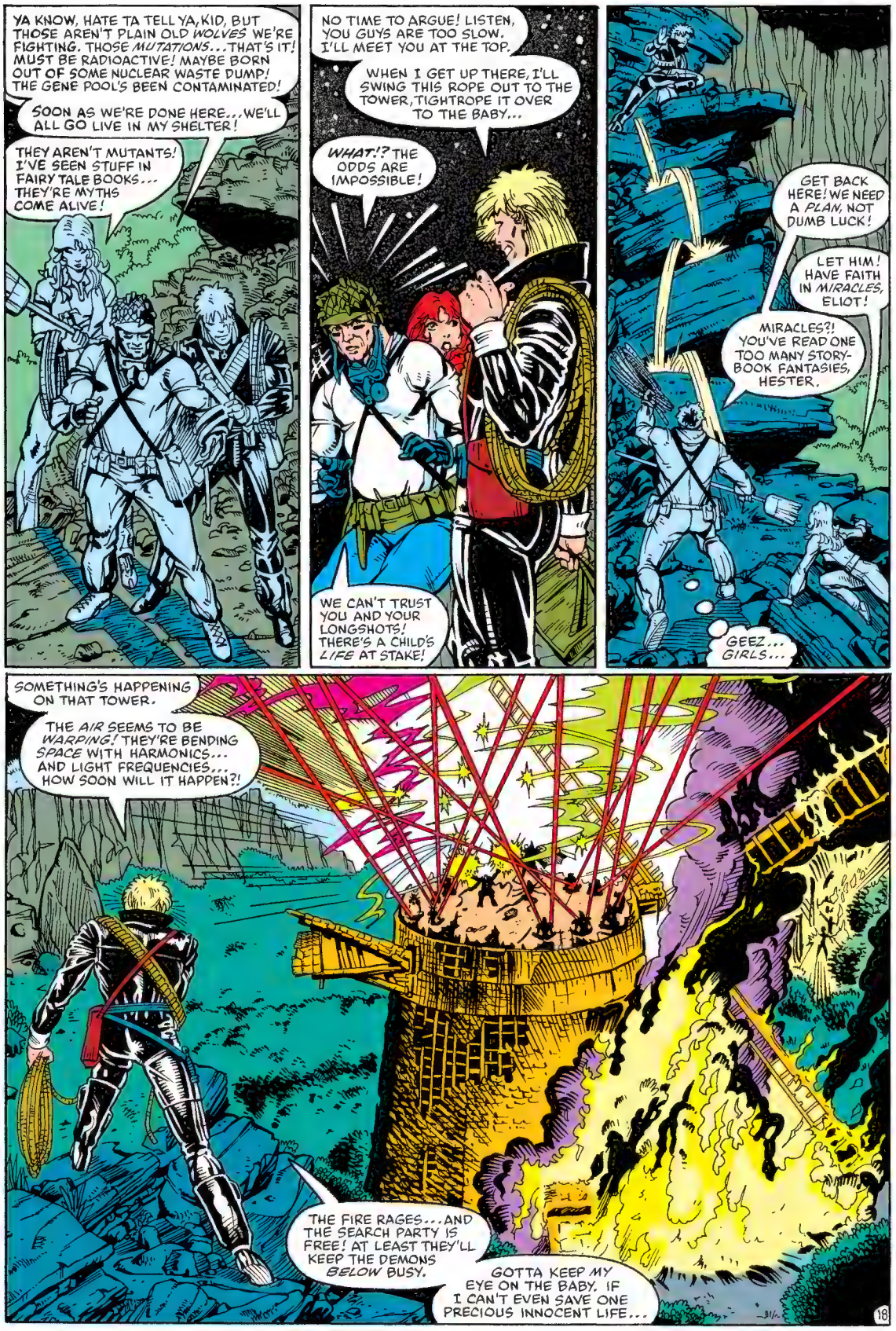

THEY FOLLOW AN INVISIBLE, YET PALPABLE TRAIL...
YES! THIS IS THE WAY. THE PATH IS BLAZED WITH THEIR STENCH!
THE COLORS... LOOK FUNNY. SMELL'S OFF... IT'S ALL SO WARPED. MUST BE ME...OH, BABY, PLEASE BE ALIVE! YOU WERE ALL I HAD LEFT OF YOUR DADDY...
I KNOW WHAT'S DOWN HERE! THE OLD INDIAN BURIAL GROUND! SAID TO BE DANGEROUSLY SACRED.
SOME NUT BUILT A WINDMILL THERE ONCE, WANTED TO CAPTURE THE 'WINDS OF ILL REPUTE'--SOME ION STREAM OR SOMETHING. HE'S DEAD NOW.
DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS THERE'S BEEN ALL KINDS'A METAPHYSICAL QUACKS GOING THERE TO SEARCH FOR THE SECRETS OF THAT PLACE. THEY FIND NOTHING.
USUALLY END UP DEAD.
HEY! WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED!
AH...OUR RIDICULOUS POLICE FORCE. THIS'LL BE FUN! THE POLICE ARE FOOLS!
IF YOU ENGAGE IN THE SOCIAL CONTRACT THEY OFFER, ALLOW THEM TO 'PROTECT' YOU...
...THEN ALL YOU DO IS GIVE UP YOUR OWN RIGHT TO DEFEND YOURSELF!
THEN IF YOU DEFEND YOURSELF, THEY CALL YOU A VIGILANTE! IMAGINE THAT!
AS IF I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF MYSELF! AS IF THEY CAN DEFEND ANYTHING!
WATCH THIS! I HAVE A MILLION TRAPS--ONE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE DAY WHEN THOUSANDS ARE TRYING TO GET INTO YOUR FALLOUT SHELTER!
LET'S TAKE OFF!
SNAG!
YAOWZA! FOOLS, WE NOW HAVE LEAD TIME.

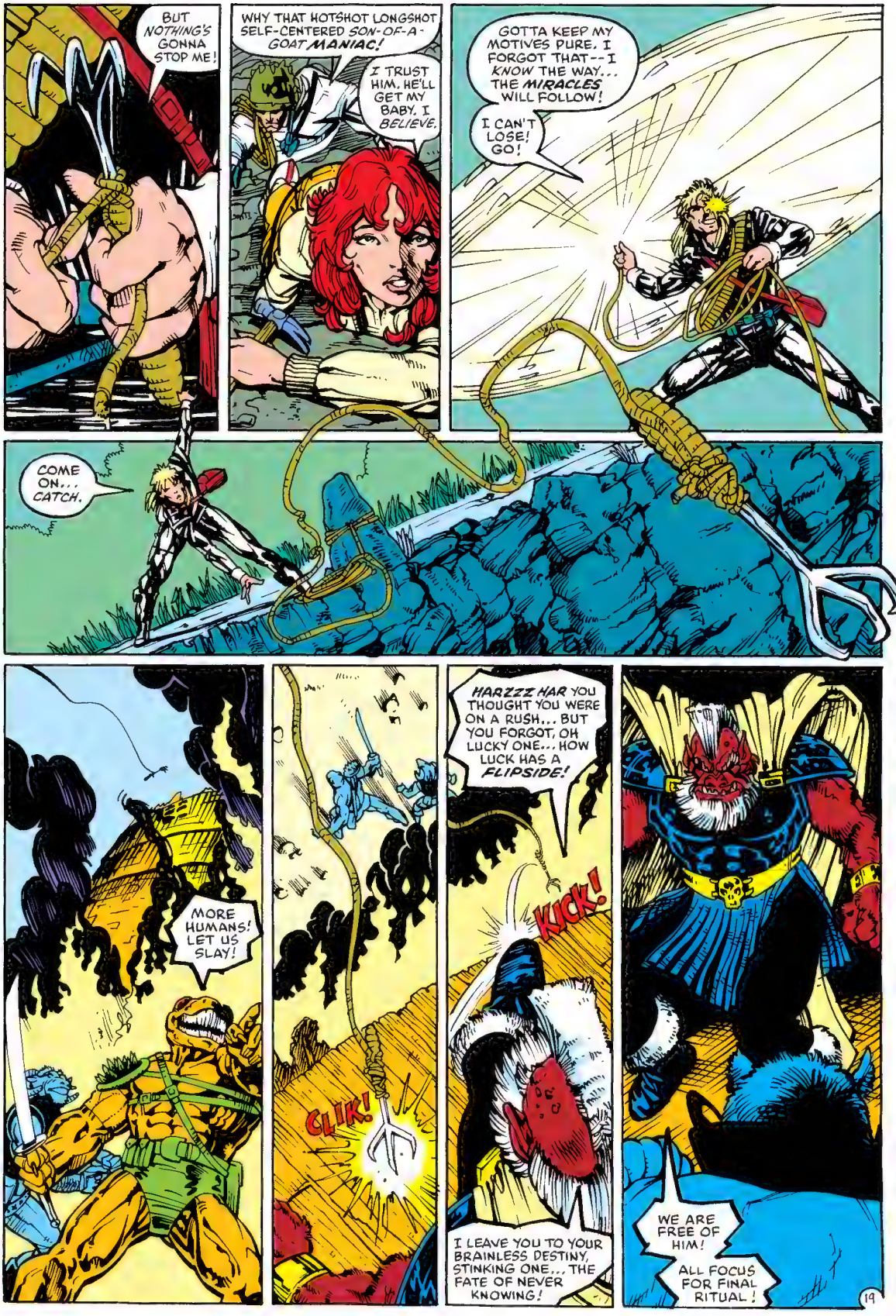

AND LATER...
FEELS SO CREEPY HERE...
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE FOLLOWED A LONGSHOT...
HEY, KID! YOU SURE...
OF COURSE! THIS PLACE IS THICK WITH THEIR STINK-- JUST ROUND THIS CLIFF...
OOOOH! THERE'RE THE MONSTERS! AND LOOK AT THE SKY! FIREWORKS! OWW...HURTS MY EYES!
SHE AIN'T KIDDING! KID... THEY'RE MONSTERS LIKE NOTHING THIS PLANET'S EVER SEEN...OH, MAN, MY EARS ARE RINGING!
IS THAT WHAT BEASTS OF THE WOODS ARE CALLED? MONSTERS? I CAN'T REMEMBER...
THIS IS SOME SORT OF RITUAL... LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE FRAGMENTING SOUND ...SIFTING LIGHT... TO RIP OPEN SPACE!
HOW DO I KNOW THIS? AS ABOVE SO BELOW-- ONCE THE SYMBOLS ALIGN, SPACE WILL OPEN!
HHKKRZZZSS HE'S HERE... BE PLEASURE TO KILL...
THE SOUND SHIFTS TO BLACK...AND THE AIR IS METALLIC, VIBRATES BLUE. THERE'S TIME TO SLAY WRETCH...IT SHALL BE!
THIS IS VILE...
MY BABY... SHE'S UP THERE WITH THOSE BEASTS...
STAY HERE AND BE BRAVE. I'LL GET YOUR CHILD. JUST WATCH ME!

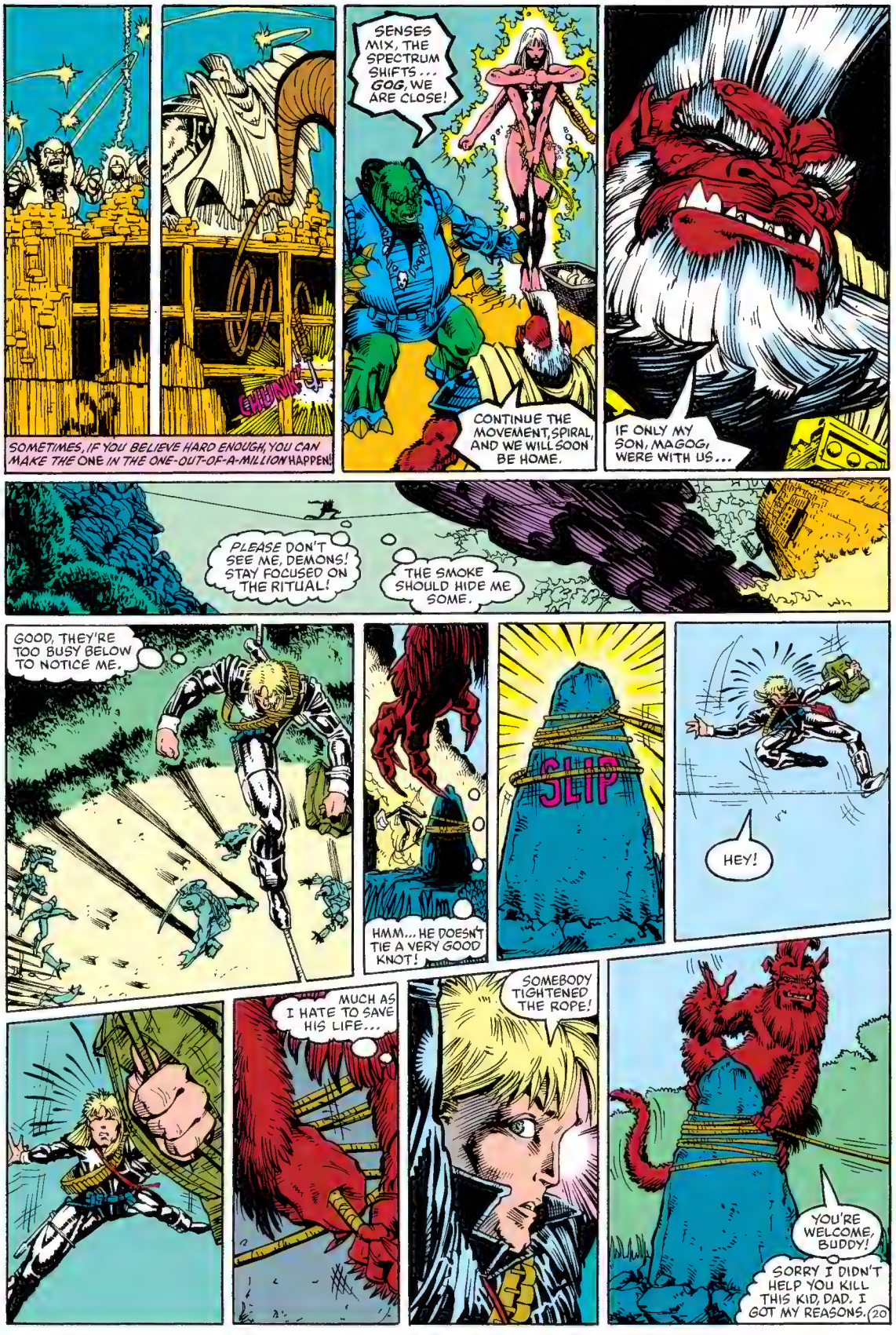

WAIT! YOU! YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED THE ODDS ARE IMPOSSIBLE!
HERE I AM, ROTTERS! GIVE ME YOUR WORST POISON!
HKZZZZ
KZZRRRKZ
HEY, MY FOOT! THEY CAN FADE OUT! I CAN'T TOUCH THEM! WHO CARES? ALL I WANT IS THAT BABY!
AND ATOP THE TOWERING WINDMILL...
FREQUENCY TRANSMUTES TO GREEN...RUN TO RED PITCH... SOUND DARKENS. ZZZZKZZ IT SHALL BE!
PURE BLOOD IS READY.. TO UNBIND WHAT IS BOUND A THOUSAND TIMES...
ZZKZZ STINKING LUCKY ONE...YOU STUCK US HERE!
WE HATE... YOU STUCK US BETWEEN KZZZK
ALL HATE YOU...YOU TORE US FROM OUR WORLD!
YOU KNOW ME?! WHO AM I?! TELL ME WHO I AM!?
YOU KNOW! I'LL RIP DOWN YOUR LYING THROAT! YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE. WE'RE GOING BACK... BUT WE'LL LEAVE YOU BEHIND!

FORGOTTEN THAT BABY YOU WERE AFTER?
TELL ME WHO I AM! GET BACK HERE!
AND UP ABOVE...
ZZRZKAA...
YOU HEAR? LUCKY ONE HAS AN EMPTY MIND! THE SPINELESS ONES SCRAPED IT RAW! HARRKZZ
LET ME TEASE HIM...ZZKZZ I WANT HIM BEFORE...
NO, SPIRAL... CONTINUE YOUR DANCE... HKZIZ WE ARE CLOSE!
VENGEANCE ENOUGH TO LEAVE HIM BEHIND, WITH HIS WIPED MIND. HARHARZZAHAR NEVER TO KNOW...
AND BELOW...
NOT HERE NOR THERE! ZZKKRZ STUCK BECAUSE OF YOU!
YOU FORGET YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME.
UNLESS I WANT TO BE TOUCHED!
SO HURT AWHILE!
YOU STUCK US BETWEEN...
...BUT FORGOT THE SHIFTING POWER THAT GAVE US!
A STRAY SPARK...
...MEETS THE WOOD TOWER...
...AND TOGETHER THEY MAKE FIRE! THE TOWER BURNS!
16


BACK SO SOON?
YOU FORGET SOMETHING?
WHY DIDN'T YOU GO FOR THE BABY?! THOUGHT YOU'D CHAT INSTEAD?!
THEY TEASED HIM, ELIOT! YOU HEARD! EASY ON HIM, HE TRIED... OH, BUT MY BABY...
YOU'RE A SHOW-OFF!
BUT I WANT TO KNOW WHO I AM! AND THEY KNOW!
NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. I GOT SELFISH. SOMETHING WAS WRONG... OR MISSING...
GOTTA KEEP YER MOTIVES PURE, BUDDY. YOU CAN'T TRUST LUCK TO PULL PUNCHES FOR YOU...
WAITAMINUTE! THAT'S IT!
SOON AS I FORGOT THE BABY... I FELT SOMETHING SLIP AWAY! I WASN'T ON ANYMORE! I LOST MY WAY!
I KNOW HOW TO DO IT NOW.
WE GO RIGHT FOR THE BABY. LET'S CLIMB!
UP YA GO. GOOD GIRL. YOU'RE A REAL TROOPER, HESTER.
THAT'S BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN YOU! YOU CAN DO MIRACLES!
HEY! THAT'S STRANGE... ALL MY MECHANICAL TOOLS HAVE GLITCHES. EVEN MICKEY QUIT TICKING!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. BUT THEN... THIS IS A HOPEFUL UNIVERSE!
SOMETHING'S WRONG IN THIS WHOLE VALLEY. EVERYTHING'S OFF... OUT OF SYNC!
NO, HE'S MINE!
LOOK AT THEM RUN AWAY! I'LL GO SLAY..
NO. IF I MUST KILL YOU FIRST, HE'S MINE!


YA KNOW, HATE TA TELL YA, KID, BUT THOSE AREN'T PLAIN OLD *WOLVES* WE'RE FIGHTING. THOSE *MUTATIONS*... THAT'S IT! MUST BE RADIOACTIVE! MAYBE BORN OUT OF SOME NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP! THE GENE POOL'S BEEN CONTAMINATED!
SOON AS WE'RE DONE HERE... WE'LL ALL GO LIVE IN MY SHELTER!
THEY AREN'T MUTANTS! I'VE SEEN STUFF IN FAIRY TALE BOOKS... THEY'RE MYTHS COME ALIVE!
NO TIME TO ARGUE! LISTEN, YOU GUYS ARE TOO SLOW. I'LL MEET YOU AT THE TOP.
WHEN I GET UP THERE, I'LL SWING THIS ROPE OUT TO THE TOWER, TIGHTROPE IT OVER TO THE BABY...
WHAT!? THE ODDS ARE IMPOSSIBLE!
WE CAN'T TRUST YOU AND YOUR LONGSHOTS! THERE'S A CHILD'S *LIFE* AT STAKE!
GET BACK HERE! WE NEED A *PLAN*, NOT DUMB LUCK!
LET HIM! HAVE FAITH IN *MIRACLES*, ELIOT!
MIRACLES?! YOU'VE READ ONE TOO MANY STORY-BOOK FANTASIES, HESTER.
GEEZ... GIRLS...
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING ON THAT TOWER.
THE *AIR* SEEMS TO BE *WARPING!* THEY'RE BENDING *SPACE* WITH HARMONICS... AND LIGHT FREQUENCIES... HOW SOON WILL IT HAPPEN?!
THE FIRE RAGES... AND THE SEARCH PARTY IS FREE! AT LEAST THEY'LL KEEP THE DEMONS *BELOW* BUSY.
GOTTA KEEP MY EYE ON THE BABY. IF I CAN'T EVEN SAVE ONE PRECIOUS INNOCENT LIFE...


BUT NOTHING'S GONNA STOP ME!
WHY THAT HOTSHOT LONGSHOT SELF-CENTERED SON-OF-A-GOAT MANIAC!
I TRUST HIM, HE'LL GET MY BABY, I BELIEVE.
GOTTA KEEP MY MOTIVES PURE. I FORGOT THAT-- I KNOW THE WAY... THE MIRACLES WILL FOLLOW!
I CAN'T LOSE! GO!
COME ON... CATCH.
MORE HUMANS! LET US SLAY!
CLIK!
HARZZZ HAR YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE ON A RUSH... BUT YOU FORGOT, OH LUCKY ONE... HOW LUCK HAS A FLIPSIDE!
KICK!
I LEAVE YOU TO YOUR BRAINLESS DESTINY, STINKING ONE... THE FATE OF NEVER KNOWING!
WE ARE FREE OF HIM!
ALL FOCUS FOR FINAL RITUAL!


SOMETIMES, IF YOU BELIEVE HARD ENOUGH, YOU CAN MAKE THE ONE IN THE ONE-OUT-OF-A-MILLION HAPPEN!
CHUNK!
SENSES MIX, THE SPECTRUM SHIFTS... GOG, WE ARE CLOSE!
CONTINUE THE MOVEMENT, SPIRAL, AND WE WILL SOON BE HOME.
IF ONLY MY SON, MAGOG, WERE WITH US...
PLEASE DON'T SEE ME, DEMONS! STAY FOCUSED ON THE RITUAL!
THE SMOKE SHOULD HIDE ME SOME.
GOOD, THEY'RE TOO BUSY BELOW TO NOTICE ME.
HMM... HE DOESN'T TIE A VERY GOOD KNOT!
SLIP
HEY!
MUCH AS I HATE TO SAVE HIS LIFE...
SOMEBODY TIGHTENED THE ROPE!
YOU'RE WELCOME, BUDDY!
SORRY I DIDN'T HELP YOU KILL THIS KID, DAD. I GOT MY REASONS.
20

HE'S BACK! AND HE SAVED MY LIFE! NOW I KNOW I'LL MAKE IT!
SPIRAL REFRACTS SPACE SOUND IS WHITE LIGHT IS LOUD COLOR ECHOES BY GOG AND MAGOG WE ARE DONE!
LISTEN TO THAT! IT'S GONNA HAPPEN! I CAN FEEL IT!
I'M WITH YOU! I BELIEVE!
GOOD LUCK, KID.
THIS IS FOR YOU, BABY!
I DID IT! THEY JUST FADE AWAY... THEY'LL RE-FORM, BUT I'VE GOT THE FEW MOMENTS I NEED!
ZZZKKSS

HI BABY! I THINK I HEAR YOUR MOTHER CALLING!
WAAAAH!
NO! HE'S RUINED US AGAIN! THINGS CHANGE NOW! WE DON'T GO BACK...UNTIL HE'S DEAD!
BY GOG AND M'GOG-- TILL YOU'RE DEAD!
LOOK OUT! HE ZAPPED THE ROPE!
HURRY HURRY HURRY!

WHOA...I'M GOING UP!
HEY, THANKS, BUDDY!
MY BABY! YOU... YOU'RE...BEAUTIFUL.
I LOVE YOU. I DO. I LOVE EVERYBODY... THE WHOLE WORLD!
AWW SHUCKS...
AND DOWN BELOW...
KEEP SHOOTIN'!
BUT THEY'RE FADING!
KEEP SHOOTIN'!
BUT THEY'RE GONE!
KEEP SHOOTIN'!
THE DEMONS HAVE FADED AWAY.
YEAH! DRIVE THOSE COPS CRAZY! THEY'LL GO TO THEIR GRAVES WONDERING ABOUT THIS DAY, AND THOSE CRITTERS! WAITAMINUTE... I PROBABLY WILL TOO!
LOOK UP THERE! LOOK AT THAT GUY!
IT'S THE BABY-KIDNAPPER!
LET'S GET HIM!
YOU KNOW, KID, YOU'RE AS OUT OF SYNC AS THIS VALLEY. WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME!

OH... UM... CALL ME WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
I CALL HIM LONGSHOT!
MAYBE, BUT... WELL, HIS LONGSHOTS WORK!
I... I'D BETTER SAY GOODBYE, HESTER-- DON'T FORGET ABOUT THOSE MIRACLES.
AND, ELIOT--I HOPE THE WORLD DOESN'T BLOW UP-- EVEN IF THAT MEANS YOU'LL NEVER GET TO TEST OUT YOUR FALLOUT SHELTER.
BUT NEXT TIME I PASS THROUGH I'LL STOP IN AND TRY THAT FREEZE-DRIED ICE-CREAM.
AND YOU'LL STOP IN TO SEE ONE LITTLE BABY WHO OWES YOU HER LIFE!
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE, KID. YOU BETTER GET A HOLD OF SOME MONEY. IT'S THE BEST UNIT OF STORED ENERGY AROUND, AND IT POWERS THE WHOLE PLANET.
THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED-- MONEY.
NOW... GET OUTTA HERE ÷SNIFF÷ BEFORE THE GIRL... ÷SNIFF÷... STARTS CRYING...
MONEY, HUH? WELL, FIRST I FIND THOSE DEMONS. I GOT A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK THEM...
PSSSST!
HI THERE, SWEET-HEART.
LONGSHOT --YUK YUK YUK-- WHAT A NAME!
HI! THAT'S WHAT ELIOT CALLS ME-- LONGSHOT. SHOULD I KEEP IT?
SMART MAN, ELIOT. SURE, KEEP IT-- THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE-- A MIRACULOUS LONGSHOT.
YOU'LL SEE.
HEY! YOU GOT A SECRET? YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT ME?
NAH, THERE ARE NO SECRETS.
I BETTER WATCH THIS GUY...
MORE DEMONS, BETRAYALS, FIREFIGHTS, MIRACLES AND INTRODUCING... RICOCHET RITA! NEXT IN "STUNTMAN!"

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2
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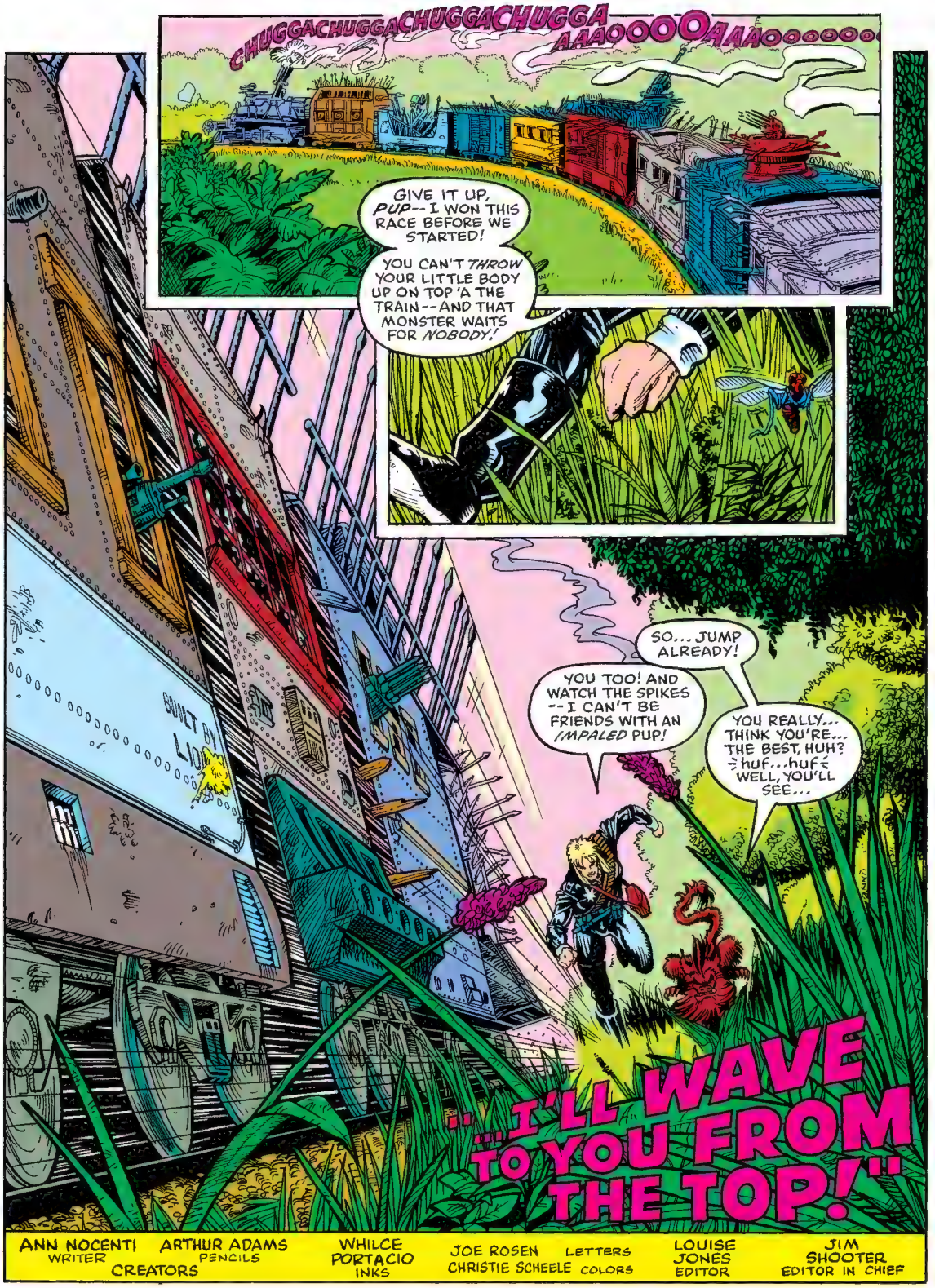
LONGSHOT
TM
ARTHUR ADAMS


CHUGGACHUGGACHUGGACHUGGA
AAAOOOOAAAOOOOOO
GIVE IT UP, PUP-- I WON THIS RACE BEFORE WE STARTED!
YOU CAN'T THROW YOUR LITTLE BODY UP ON TOP 'A THE TRAIN--AND THAT MONSTER WAITS FOR NOBODY!
SO... JUMP ALREADY!
YOU TOO! AND WATCH THE SPIKES --I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH AN IMPALED PUP!
YOU REALLY... THINK YOU'RE... THE BEST, HUH? =huf...huf= WELL, YOU'LL SEE...
"...I'LL WAVE TO YOU FROM THE TOP!"

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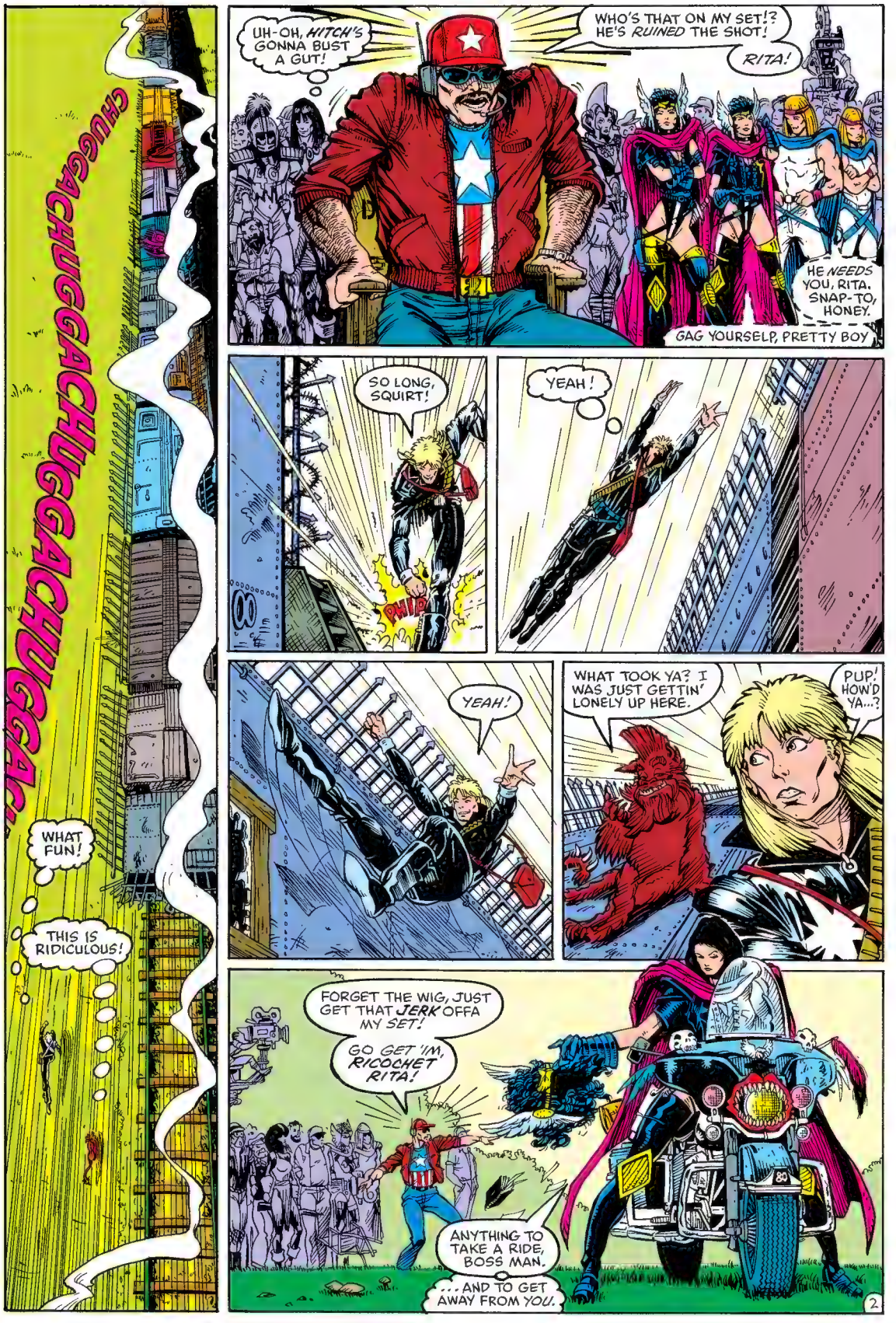
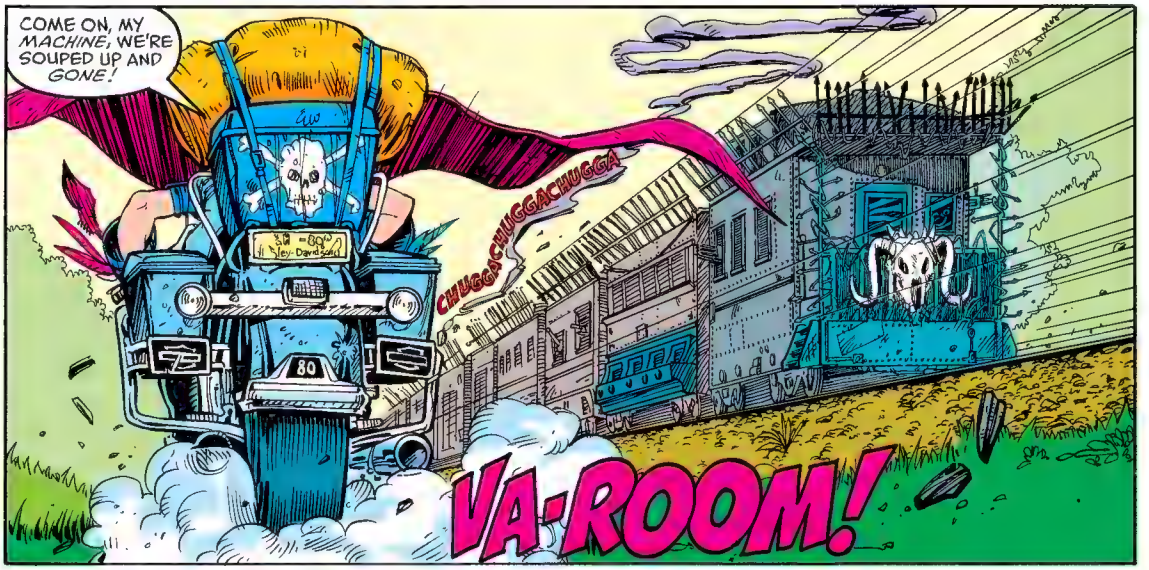
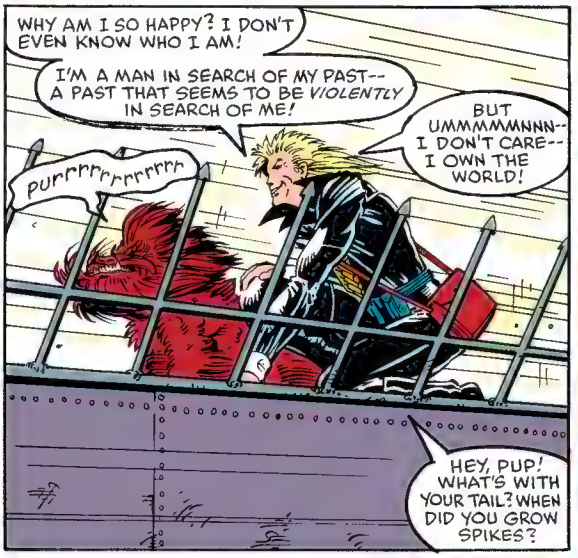
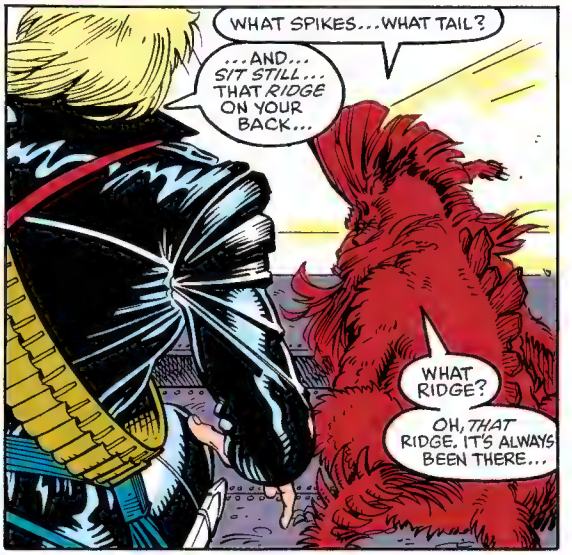

CHUGGACHUGGACHUGGACHUGGA...
WHAT FUN!
THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
UH-OH, HITCH'S GONNA BUST A GUT!
WHO'S THAT ON MY SET!? HE'S RUINED THE SHOT!
RITA!
HE NEEDS YOU, RITA. SNAP-TO, HONEY.
GAG YOURSELF, PRETTY BOY
SO LONG, SQUIRT!
PWIP
YEAH!
YEAH!
WHAT TOOK YA? I WAS JUST GETTIN' LONELY UP HERE.
PUP! HOW'D YA...?
FORGET THE WIG, JUST GET THAT JERK OFFA MY SET!
GO GET 'IM, RICOCHET RITA!
ANYTHING TO TAKE A RIDE, BOSS MAN.
... AND TO GET AWAY FROM YOU.
2

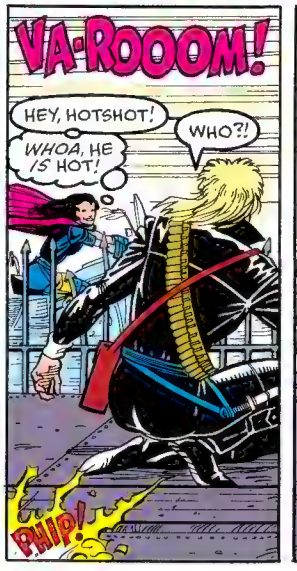

COME ON, MY MACHINE, WE'RE SOUPED UP AND GONE!
CHUGGACHUGGACHUGGA
VA-ROOM!

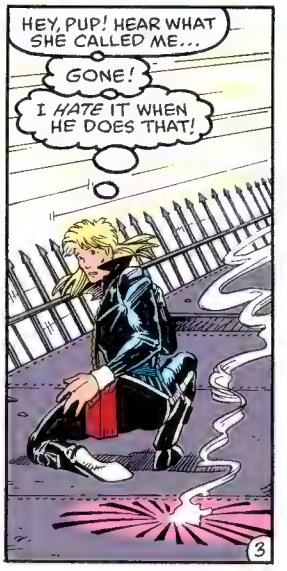

WHY AM I SO HAPPY? I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM!
I'M A MAN IN SEARCH OF MY PAST-- A PAST THAT SEEMS TO BE VIOLENTLY IN SEARCH OF ME!
BUT UMMMMMMNNN-- I DON'T CARE-- I OWN THE WORLD!
purrrrrrrrrrr
HEY, PUP! WHAT'S WITH YOUR TAIL? WHEN DID YOU GROW SPIKES?

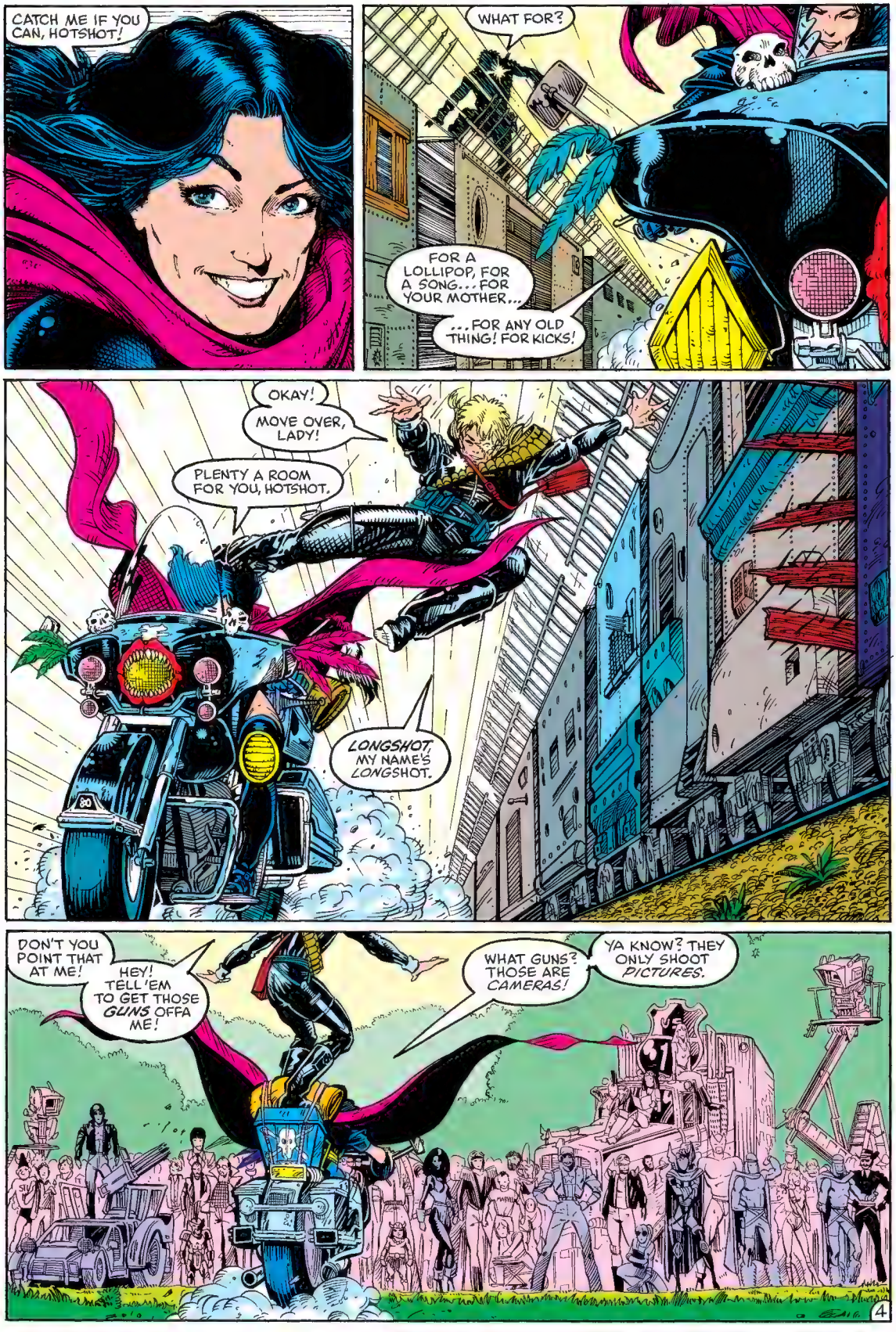

WHAT SPIKES... WHAT TAIL?
...AND... SIT STILL... THAT RIDGE ON YOUR BACK...
WHAT RIDGE?
OH, THAT RIDGE. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THERE...

IT HAS NOT!... STOP SQUIRMING! YOU'RE CHANGING, PUP!
STOP PICKIN' AT ME!
BUT...

GET YER EYES OFFA ME!


VA-ROOOM!
HEY, HOTSHOT!
WHOA, HE IS HOT!
WHO?!
PHP!


HEY, PUP! HEAR WHAT SHE CALLED ME...
GONE!
I HATE IT WHEN HE DOES THAT!
3


CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, HOTSHOT!
WHAT FOR?
FOR A LOLLIPOP, FOR A SONG... FOR YOUR MOTHER...
...FOR ANY OLD THING! FOR KICKS!
OKAY!
MOVE OVER, LADY!
PLENTY A ROOM FOR YOU, HOTSHOT.
LONGSHOT. MY NAME'S LONGSHOT.
DON'T YOU POINT THAT AT ME!
HEY! TELL 'EM TO GET THOSE GUNS OFFA ME!
WHAT GUNS? THOSE ARE CAMERAS!
YA KNOW? THEY ONLY SHOOT PICTURES.
4

DELIVERING ONE *JERK*, JUST AS YOU ORDERED, BOSS.

ER... HEH HEH, NOW, SON, I NEVER SAID *JERK*.

THERE'RE EASIER WAYS TO GET A JOB THAN TO PULL A STUNT LIKE THAT.

YOU RUINED MY SHOT! IF YOU WEREN'T SO *GOOD*, I'D KILL YOU!

'ROUND HERE, FOLKS CALL ME *HITCH* ON 'COUNT OF MY BRILLIANCE AS A DIRECTOR.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK ... GET IT?

SO, MY NEW *STUNTMAN!* WHAT'S *YOUR* NAME?

I'M LONGSHOT!

BUT I'M NO *STUNTMAN!*

WITH YOUR *DREAMY* FACE AND A NAME LIKE *LONGSHOT*, WHAT ELSE *COULD* YOU BE-- BESIDES THE *STAR*?!

DREAMY?!

MMMM...

UH-OH... *COMPETITION!*

NOW *YOU'LL* GET TO BE PART OF THIS-- MY MOVIE OF THE FUTURE!

IT'S ABOUT A BUNCH OF DISPLACED PEOPLE WHO FORM A BAND OF *FUTURISTIC PIRATES!* THEY ROB THE RICH TO GIVE TO THEMSELVES!

IT'S MY STATEMENT ON UNEMPLOYMENT. BRILLIANT, EH?

AND I'M OFFERING YOU THE *HONOR* OF WORKING WITH SOME GREAT *MOVIE STARS!*

MOVIE *STARS*?! YOU POOR GUYS! WHAT AN *AWFUL* JOB!

HUH? LOOK, DON'T YOU WANT TO MAKE *MONEY*?

MONEY? GREAT! A GUY I MET SAID I SHOULD GET SOME OF THAT, FAST!

HEH-HEH... YOU'RE WEIRD, KID, BUT...

I WANT YOU TO *STUNT*-DOUBLE FOR MY MAIN MAN HERE --IVAN.

HEY! THAT'S *MY* JOB!

NOT ANY-MORE.

5

WHY, YOU...! WORK HERE IS *DANGEROUS*--I HOPE IT KILLS *YOU!* YOU JUST MADE A POWERFUL ENEMY, KID.

WHAT'D I DO?

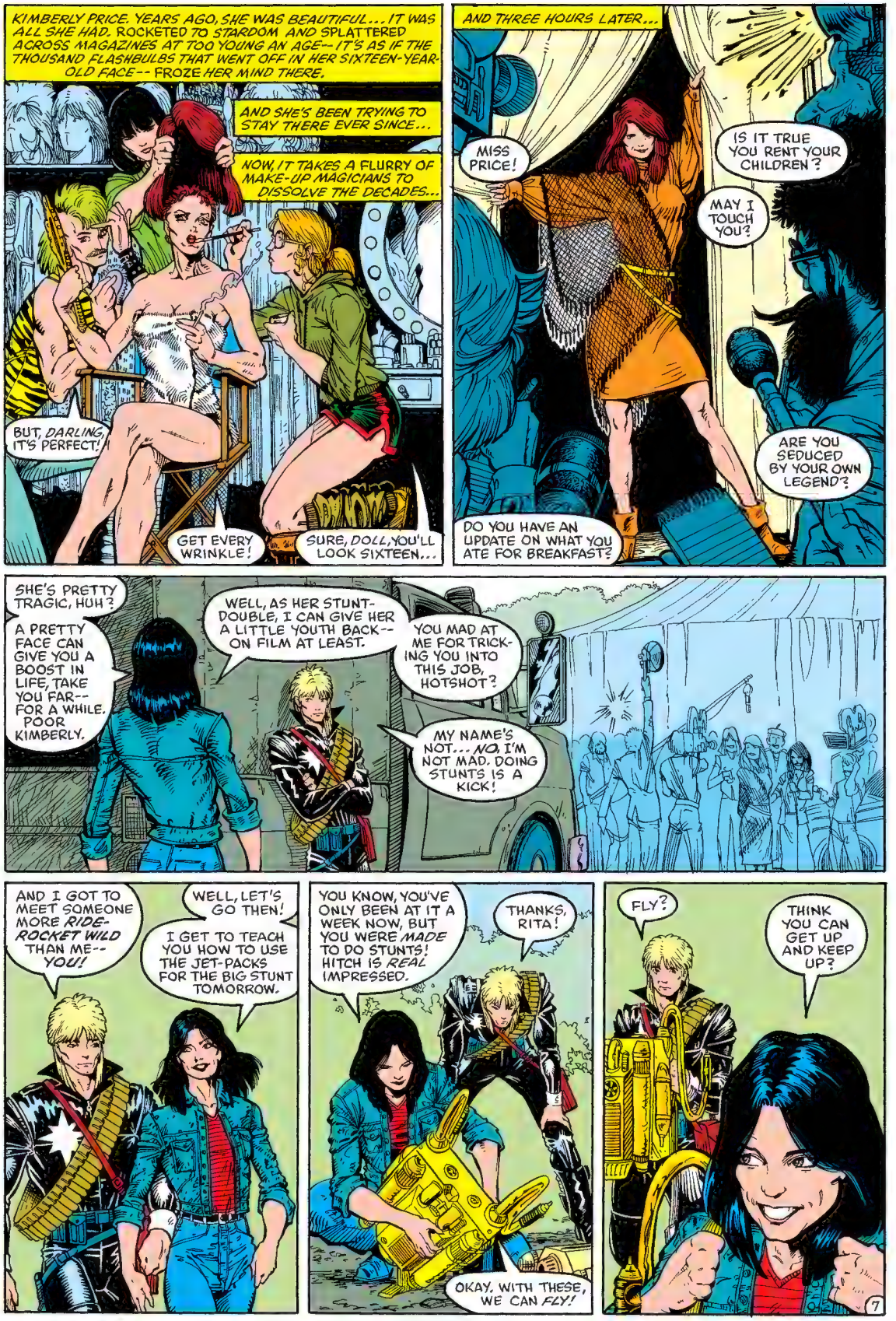
NOW WATCH *IVAN*, AND...

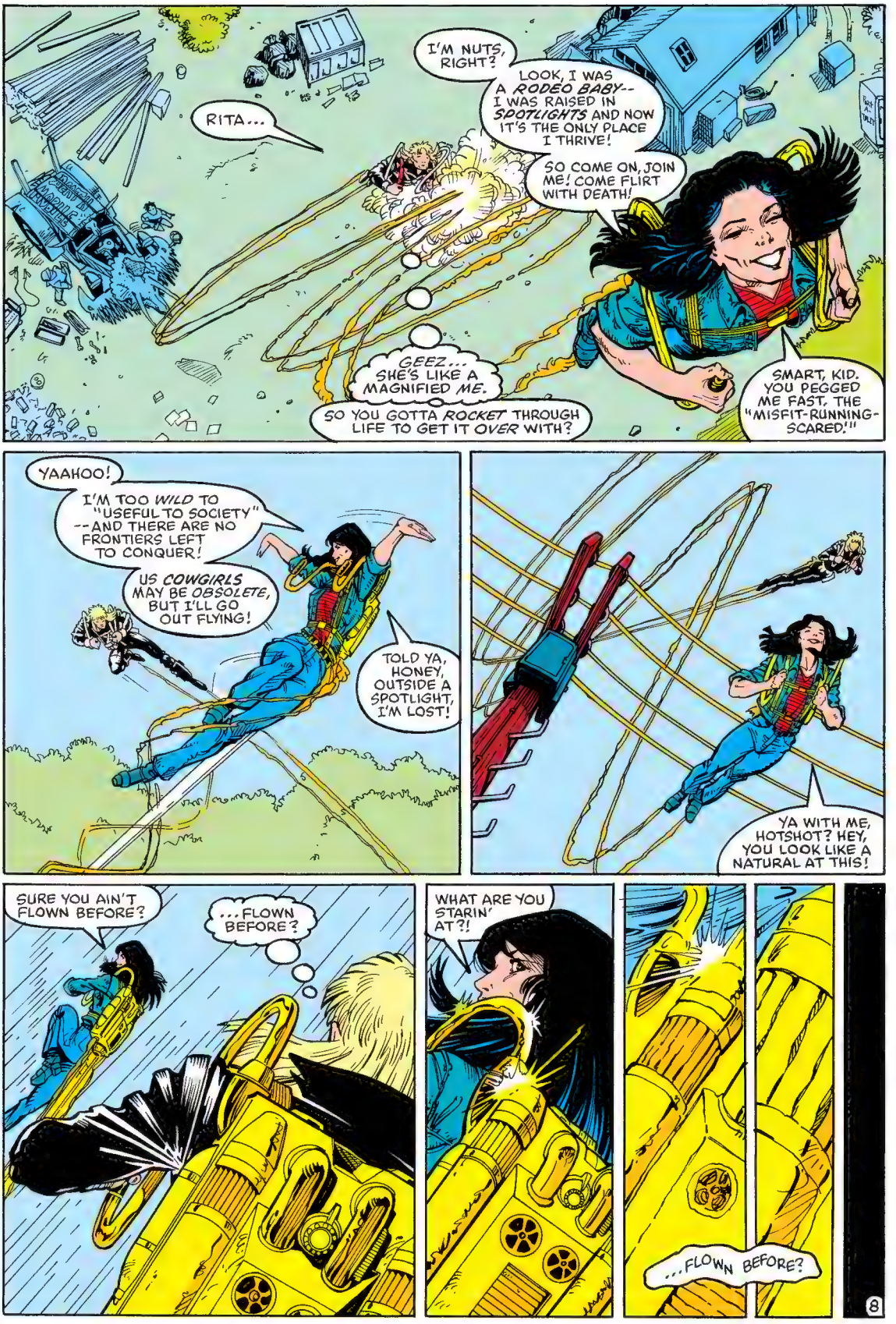
YES... *STUDY* ME--MY *EVERY* MOVE, EVERY GESTURE! IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, YOU'RE SO *CRUDE*, BUT YOU MUST ELEVATE YOURSELF IF YOU ARE TO *BECOME* ME.

AND, OF COURSE, YOU'LL ACT AS MY PERSONAL VALET, ALSO...

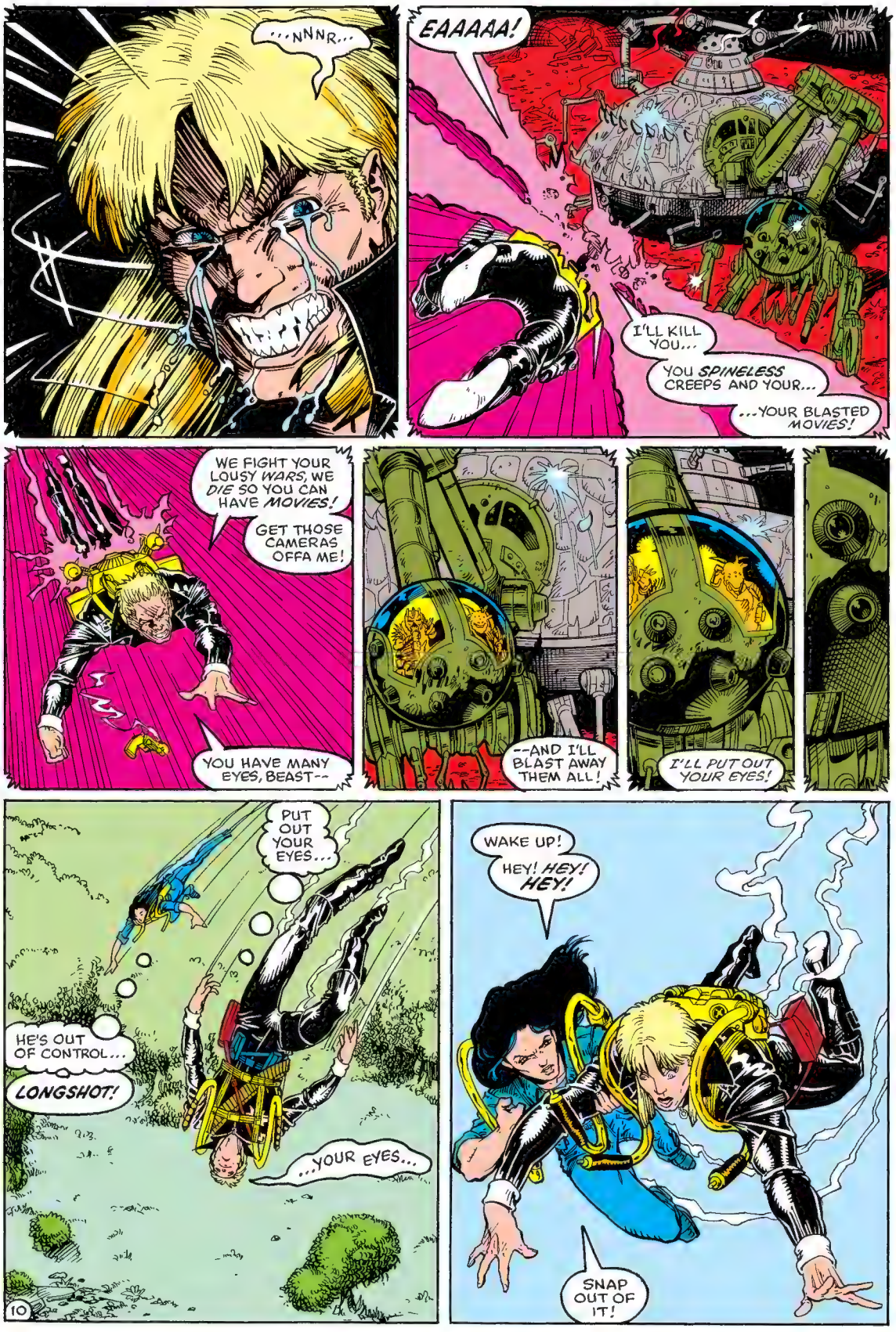
NOW COLLECT MY THINGS... WATCH THE *DRAMA* OF MY GESTURES CAREFULLY!

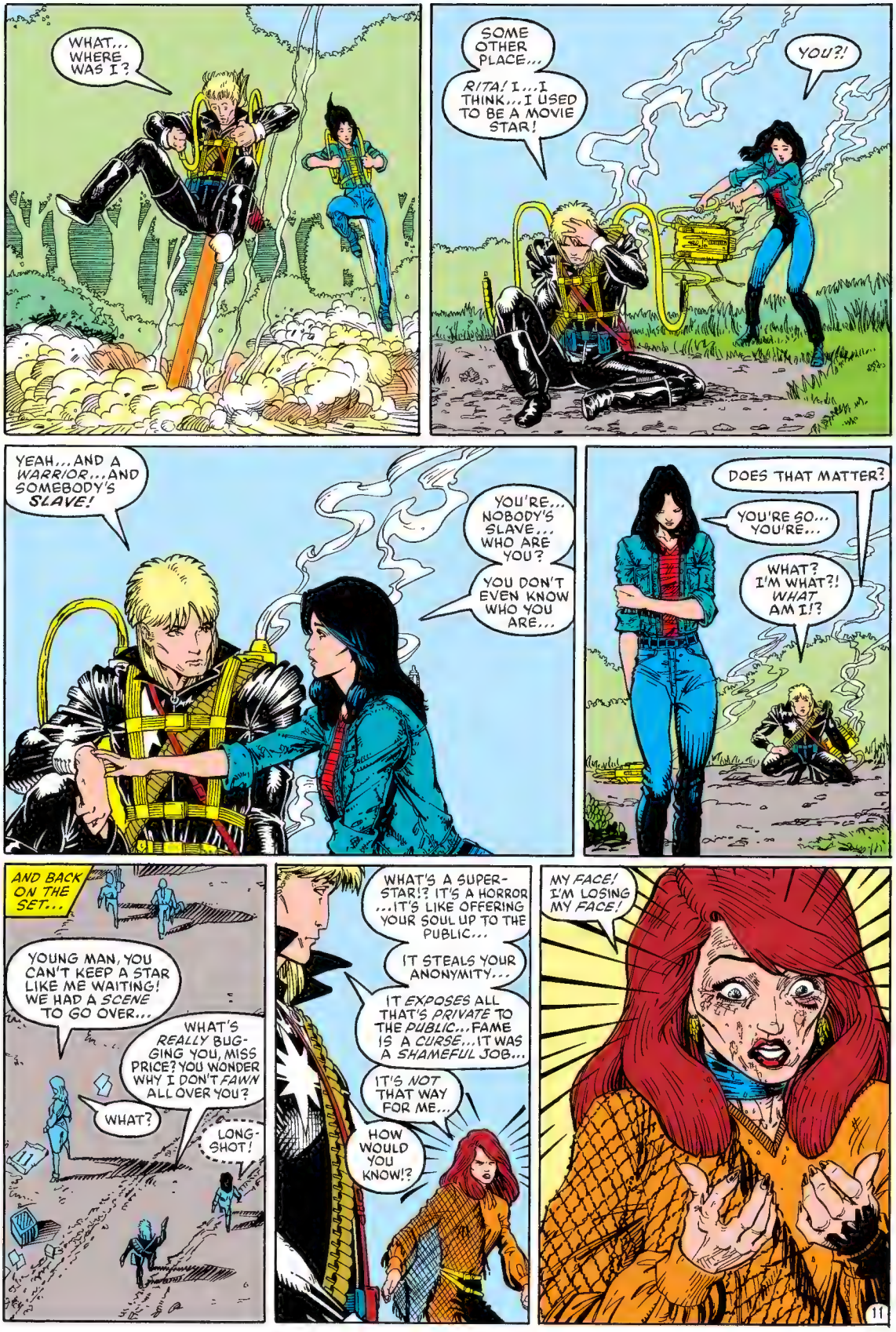
6

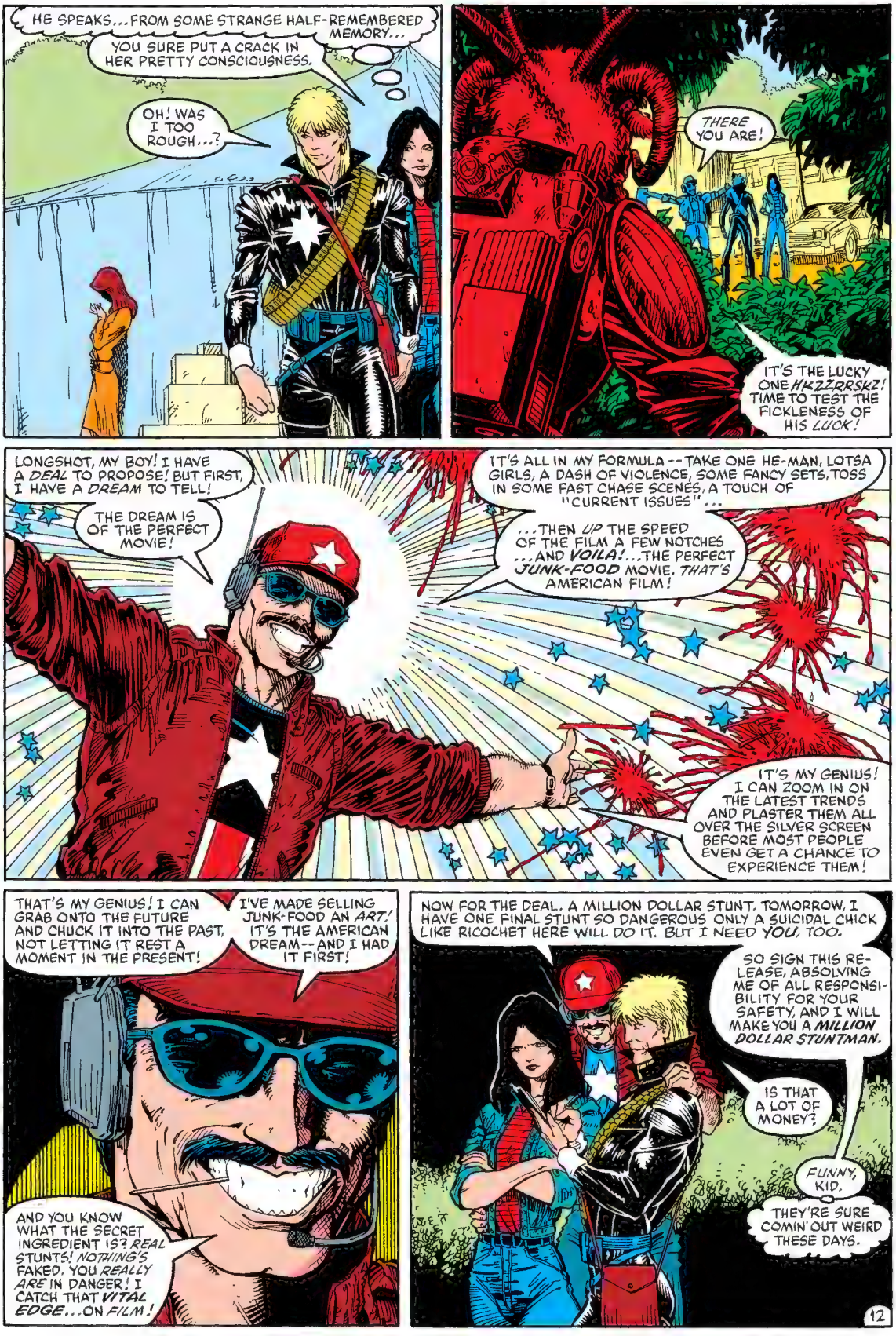

KIMBERLY PRICE. YEARS AGO, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL... IT WAS ALL SHE HAD. ROCKETED TO STARDOM AND SPLATTERED ACROSS MAGAZINES AT TOO YOUNG AN AGE-- IT'S AS IF THE THOUSAND FLASHBULBS THAT WENT OFF IN HER SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD FACE-- FROZE HER MIND THERE.
AND SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO STAY THERE EVER SINCE...
NOW, IT TAKES A FLURRY OF MAKE-UP MAGICIANS TO DISSOLVE THE DECADES...
BUT, DARLING, IT'S PERFECT!
GET EVERY WRINKLE!
SURE, DOLL, YOU'LL LOOK SIXTEEN...
AND THREE HOURS LATER...
MISS PRICE!
IS IT TRUE YOU RENT YOUR CHILDREN?
MAY I TOUCH YOU?
ARE YOU SEDUCED BY YOUR OWN LEGEND?
DO YOU HAVE AN UPDATE ON WHAT YOU ATE FOR BREAKFAST?
SHE'S PRETTY TRAGIC, HUH?
A PRETTY FACE CAN GIVE YOU A BOOST IN LIFE, TAKE YOU FAR-- FOR A WHILE. POOR KIMBERLY.
WELL, AS HER STUNT-DOUBLE, I CAN GIVE HER A LITTLE YOUTH BACK-- ON FILM AT LEAST.
YOU MAD AT ME FOR TRICKING YOU INTO THIS JOB, HOTSHOT?
MY NAME'S NOT... NO, I'M NOT MAD. DOING STUNTS IS A KICK!
AND I GOT TO MEET SOMEONE MORE RIDE-ROCKET WILD THAN ME-- YOU!
WELL, LET'S GO THEN!
I GET TO TEACH YOU HOW TO USE THE JET-PACKS FOR THE BIG STUNT TOMORROW.
YOU KNOW, YOU'VE ONLY BEEN AT IT A WEEK NOW, BUT YOU WERE MADE TO DO STUNTS! HITCH IS REAL IMPRESSED.
THANKS, RITA!
OKAY. WITH THESE, WE CAN FLY!
FLY?
THINK YOU CAN GET UP AND KEEP UP?
7

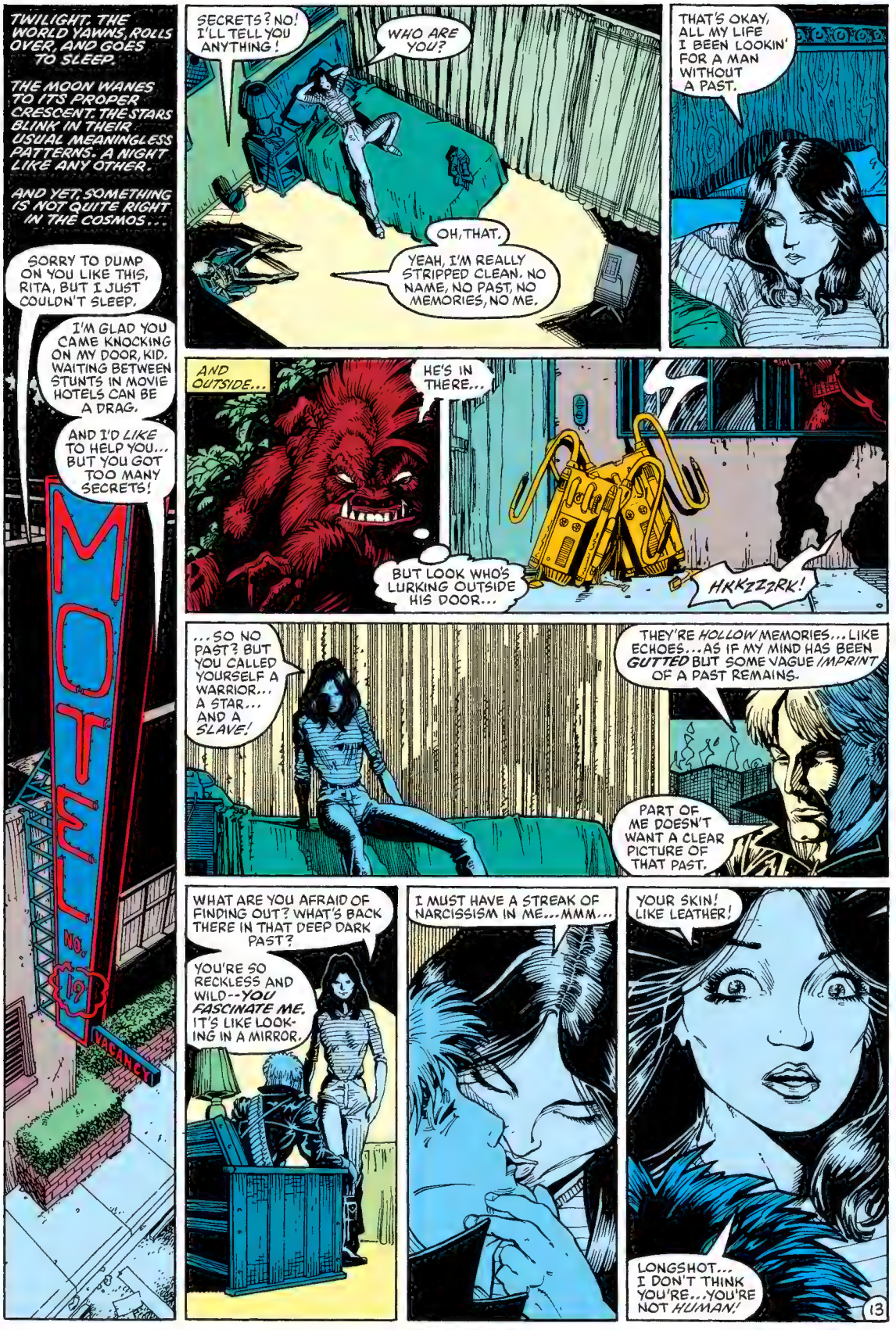

RITA...
I'M NUTS, RIGHT?
LOOK, I WAS A RODEO BABY-- I WAS RAISED IN SPOTLIGHTS AND NOW IT'S THE ONLY PLACE I THRIVE!
SO COME ON, JOIN ME! COME FLIRT WITH DEATH!
GEEZ... SHE'S LIKE A MAGNIFIED ME.
SO YOU GOTTA ROCKET THROUGH LIFE TO GET IT OVER WITH?
SMART, KID. YOU PEGGED ME FAST, THE "MISFIT-RUNNING-SCARED!"
YAAHOO!
I'M TOO WILD TO "USEFUL TO SOCIETY" --AND THERE ARE NO FRONTIERS LEFT TO CONQUER!
US COWGIRLS MAY BE OBSOLETE, BUT I'LL GO OUT FLYING!
TOLD YA, HONEY, OUTSIDE A SPOTLIGHT, I'M LOST!
YA WITH ME, HOTSHOT? HEY, YOU LOOK LIKE A NATURAL AT THIS!
SURE YOU AIN'T FLOWN BEFORE?
...FLOWN BEFORE?
WHAT ARE YOU STARIN' AT?!
...FLOWN BEFORE?

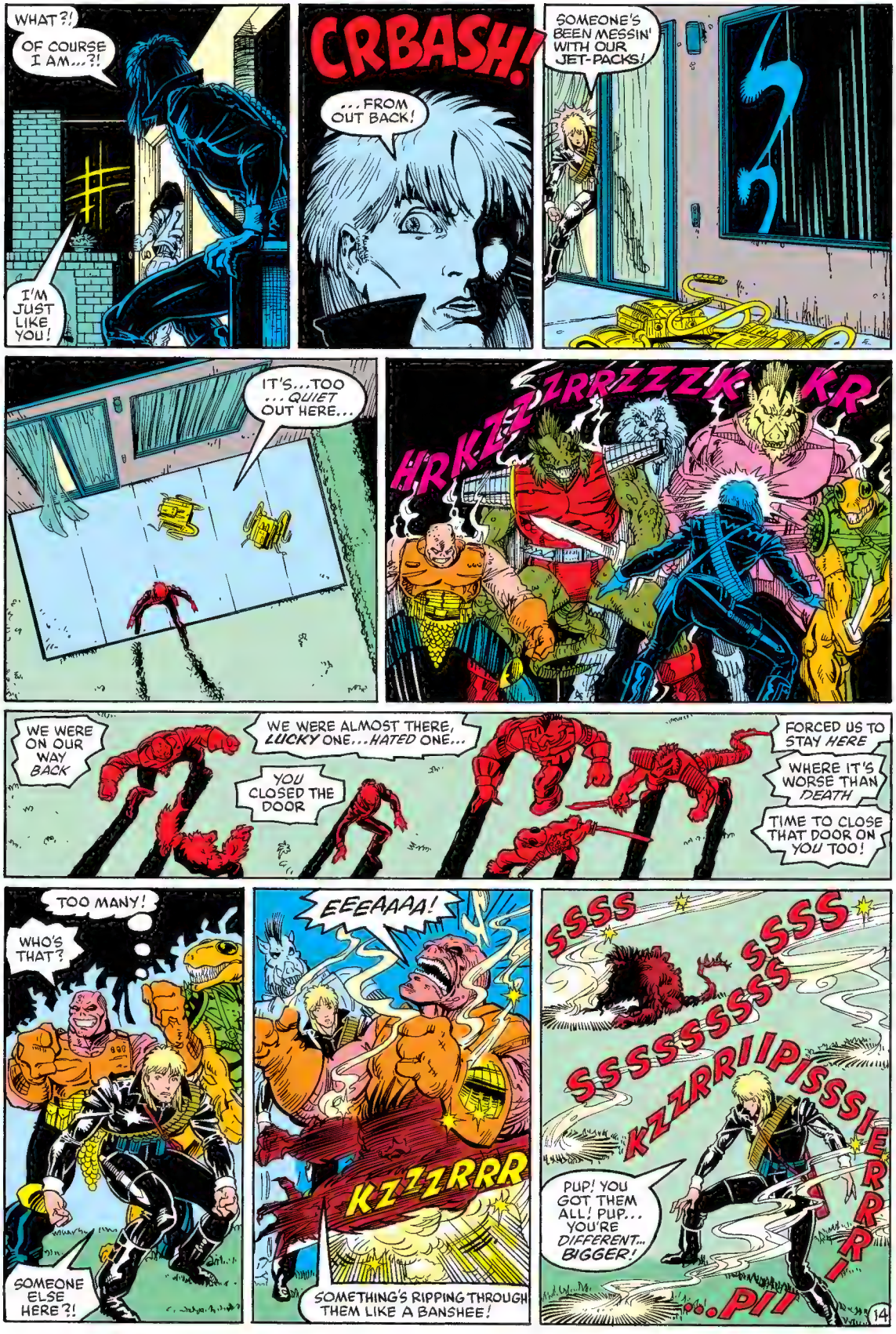
...BEFORE...
HEY, GOOD BUDDY--KEEP UP, WILL YA?!
GET ON IT! KILL THESE GUYS BEFORE THEY MULTIPLY!
LET 'EM MULTIPLY! AGAINST YOU AN' ME, JACKSON, WHO'D SURVIVE!?
YEAH, WE'RE PRETTY HOT, BUDDY, AIN'T WE!?
LISTEN, SUPERSTAR, WHEN THIS IS OVER, LET'S YOU AN' ME BUST OUTTA HERE AN'...
TOSH!
9

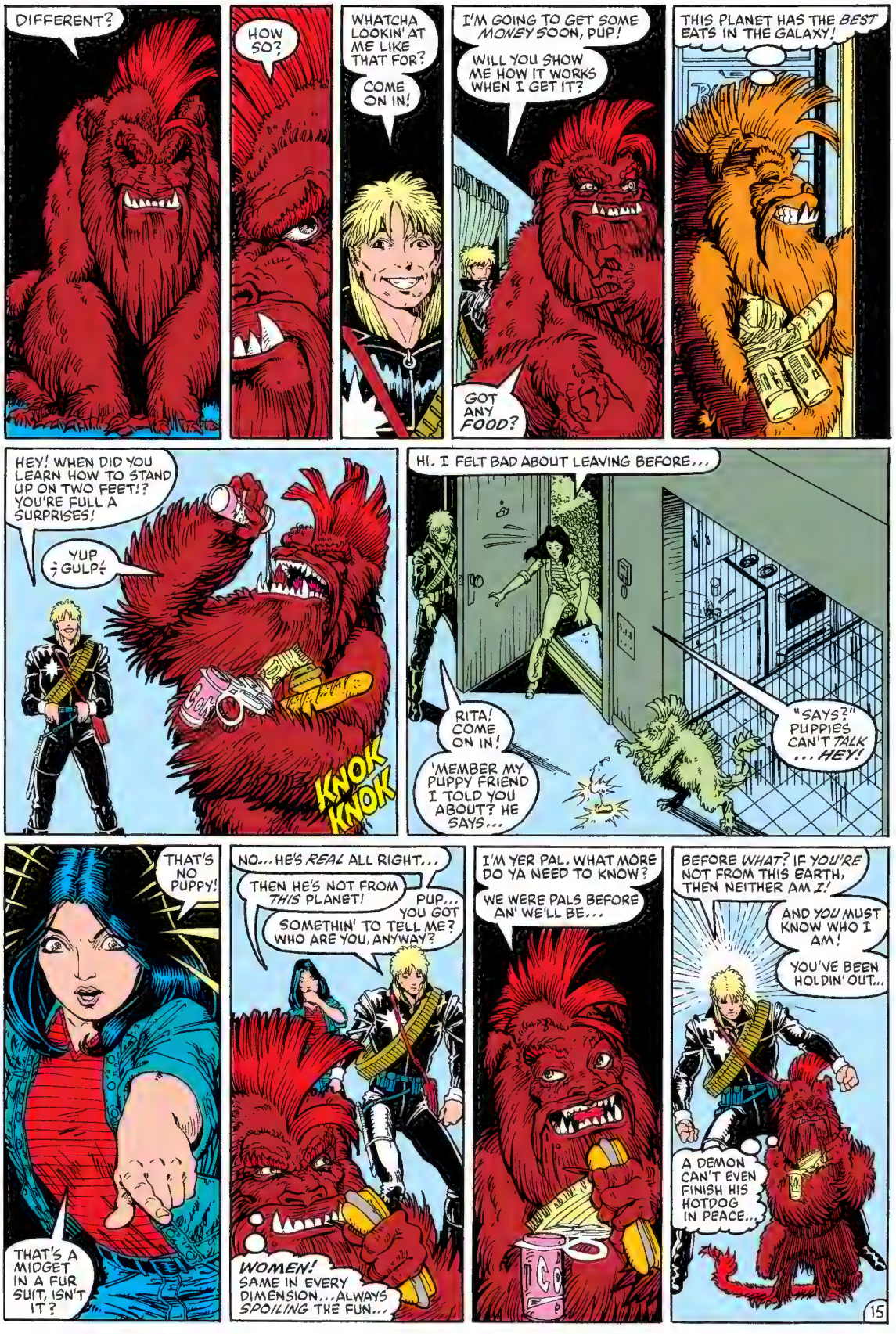

...NNNR...
EAAAAA!
I'LL KILL YOU...
YOU SPINELESS CREEPS AND YOUR...
...YOUR BLASTED MOVIES!
WE FIGHT YOUR LOUSY WARS, WE DIE SO YOU CAN HAVE MOVIES!
GET THOSE CAMERAS OFFA ME!
YOU HAVE MANY EYES, BEAST--
--AND I'LL BLAST AWAY THEM ALL!
I'LL PUT OUT YOUR EYES!
PUT OUT YOUR EYES...
HE'S OUT OF CONTROL...
LONGSHOT!
...YOUR EYES...
WAKE UP!
HEY! HEY! HEY!
SNAP OUT OF IT!


WHAT... WHERE WAS I?
SOME OTHER PLACE...
RITA! I...I THINK...I USED TO BE A MOVIE STAR!
YOU?!
YEAH...AND A WARRIOR...AND SOMEBODY'S SLAVE!
YOU'RE... NOBODY'S SLAVE... WHO ARE YOU?
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO YOU ARE...
DOES THAT MATTER?
YOU'RE SO... YOU'RE...
WHAT? I'M WHAT?! WHAT AM I!?
AND BACK ON THE SET...
YOUNG MAN, YOU CAN'T KEEP A STAR LIKE ME WAITING! WE HAD A SCENE TO GO OVER...
WHAT'S REALLY BUGGING YOU, MISS PRICE? YOU WONDER WHY I DON'T FAWN ALL OVER YOU?
WHAT?
LONG-SHOT!
WHAT'S A SUPER-STAR!? IT'S A HORROR ...IT'S LIKE OFFERING YOUR SOUL UP TO THE PUBLIC...
IT STEALS YOUR ANONYMITY...
IT EXPOSES ALL THAT'S PRIVATE TO THE PUBLIC...FAME IS A CURSE...IT WAS A SHAMEFUL JOB...
IT'S NOT THAT WAY FOR ME...
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW!?
MY FACE! I'M LOSING MY FACE!

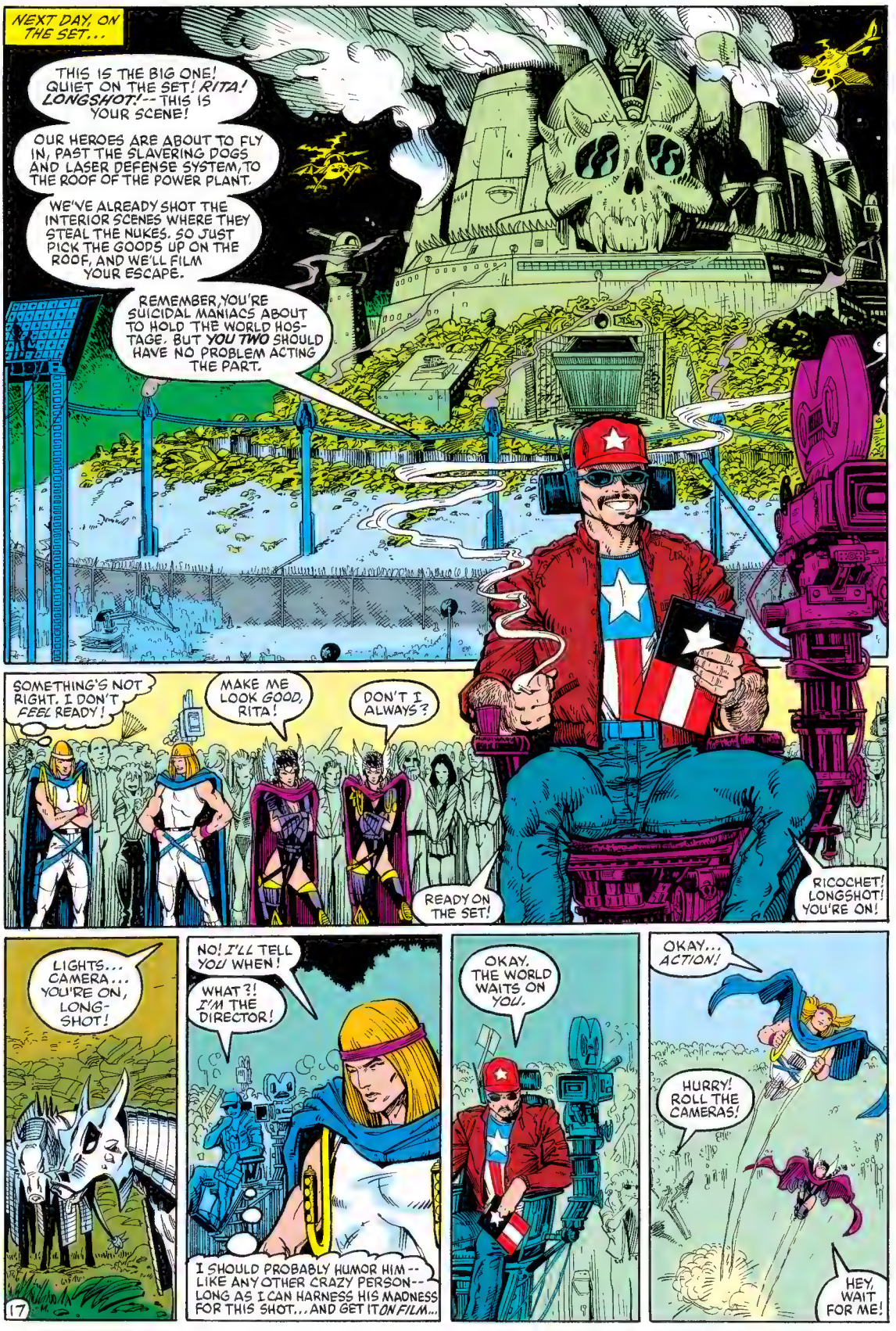

HE SPEAKS...FROM SOME STRANGE HALF-REMEMBERED MEMORY...
YOU SURE PUT A CRACK IN HER PRETTY CONSCIOUSNESS.
OH! WAS I TOO ROUGH...?
THERE YOU ARE!
IT'S THE LUCKY ONE HKZZRRSKZ! TIME TO TEST THE FICKLENESS OF HIS LUCK!
LONGSHOT, MY BOY! I HAVE A DEAL TO PROPOSE! BUT FIRST, I HAVE A DREAM TO TELL!
THE DREAM IS OF THE PERFECT MOVIE!
IT'S ALL IN MY FORMULA -- TAKE ONE HE-MAN, LOTSA GIRLS, A DASH OF VIOLENCE, SOME FANCY SETS, TOSS IN SOME FAST CHASE SCENES, A TOUCH OF "CURRENT ISSUES"...
...THEN UP THE SPEED OF THE FILM A FEW NOTCHES ...AND VOILA!...THE PERFECT JUNK-FOOD MOVIE. THAT'S AMERICAN FILM!
IT'S MY GENIUS! I CAN ZOOM IN ON THE LATEST TRENDS AND PLASTER THEM ALL OVER THE SILVER SCREEN BEFORE MOST PEOPLE EVEN GET A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE THEM!
THAT'S MY GENIUS! I CAN GRAB ONTO THE FUTURE AND CHUCK IT INTO THE PAST, NOT LETTING IT REST A MOMENT IN THE PRESENT!
I'VE MADE SELLING JUNK-FOOD AN ART! IT'S THE AMERICAN DREAM -- AND I HAD IT FIRST!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT THE SECRET INGREDIENT IS? REAL STUNTS! NOTHING'S FAKED. YOU REALLY ARE IN DANGER! I CATCH THAT VITAL EDGE...ON FILM!
NOW FOR THE DEAL. A MILLION DOLLAR STUNT. TOMORROW, I HAVE ONE FINAL STUNT SO DANGEROUS ONLY A SUICIDAL CHICK LIKE RICOCHET HERE WILL DO IT. BUT I NEED YOU, TOO.
SO SIGN THIS RELEASE, ABSOLVING ME OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SAFETY, AND I WILL MAKE YOU A MILLION DOLLAR STUNTMAN.
IS THAT A LOT OF MONEY?
FUNNY, KID.
THEY'RE SURE COMIN' OUT WEIRD THESE DAYS.
12

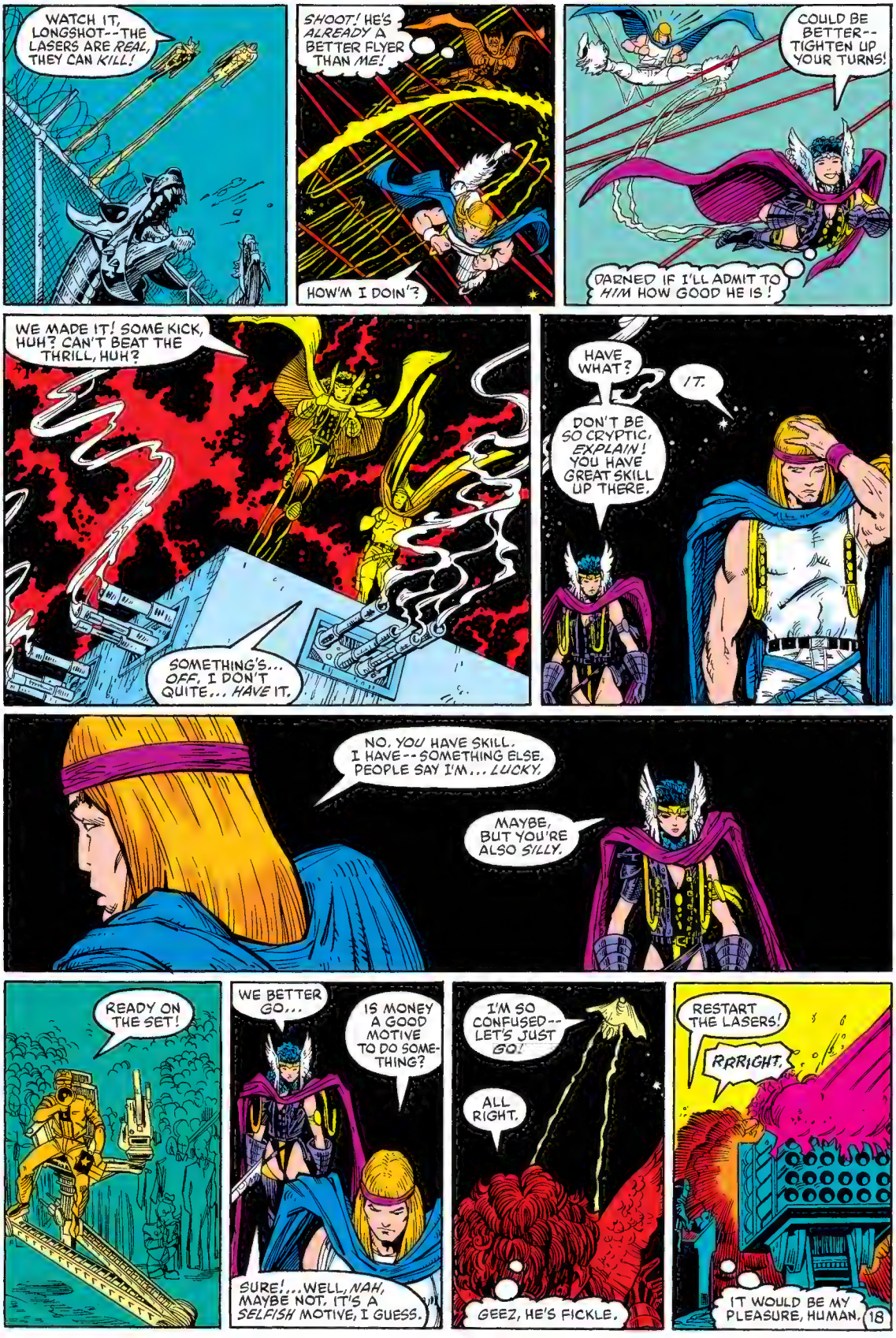

TWILIGHT. THE WORLD YAWNS, ROLLS OVER, AND GOES TO SLEEP.
THE MOON WANES TO ITS PROPER CRESCENT. THE STARS BLINK IN THEIR USUAL MEANINGLESS PATTERNS. A NIGHT LIKE ANY OTHER.
AND YET, SOMETHING IS NOT QUITE RIGHT IN THE COSMOS...
SORRY TO DUMP ON YOU LIKE THIS, RITA, BUT I JUST COULDN'T SLEEP.
I'M GLAD YOU CAME KNOCKING ON MY DOOR, KID. WAITING BETWEEN STUNTS IN MOVIE HOTELS CAN BE A DRAG.
AND I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU... BUT YOU GOT TOO MANY SECRETS!
MOTEL
NO. 19
VACANCY
SECRETS? NO! I'LL TELL YOU ANYTHING!
WHO ARE YOU?
OH, THAT.
YEAH, I'M REALLY STRIPPED CLEAN. NO NAME, NO PAST, NO MEMORIES, NO ME.
THAT'S OKAY, ALL MY LIFE I BEEN LOOKIN' FOR A MAN WITHOUT A PAST.
AND OUTSIDE...
HE'S IN THERE...
BUT LOOK WHO'S LURKING OUTSIDE HIS DOOR...
HKKZZZRK!
...SO NO PAST? BUT YOU CALLED YOURSELF A WARRIOR... A STAR... AND A SLAVE!
THEY'RE HOLLOW MEMORIES... LIKE ECHOES... AS IF MY MIND HAS BEEN GUTTED BUT SOME VAGUE IMPRINT OF A PAST REMAINS.
PART OF ME DOESN'T WANT A CLEAR PICTURE OF THAT PAST.
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF FINDING OUT? WHAT'S BACK THERE IN THAT DEEP DARK PAST?
YOU'RE SO RECKLESS AND WILD--YOU FASCINATE ME. IT'S LIKE LOOKING IN A MIRROR.
I MUST HAVE A STREAK OF NARCISSISM IN ME... MMM...
YOUR SKIN! LIKE LEATHER!
LONGSHOT... I DON'T THINK YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT HUMAN!
13

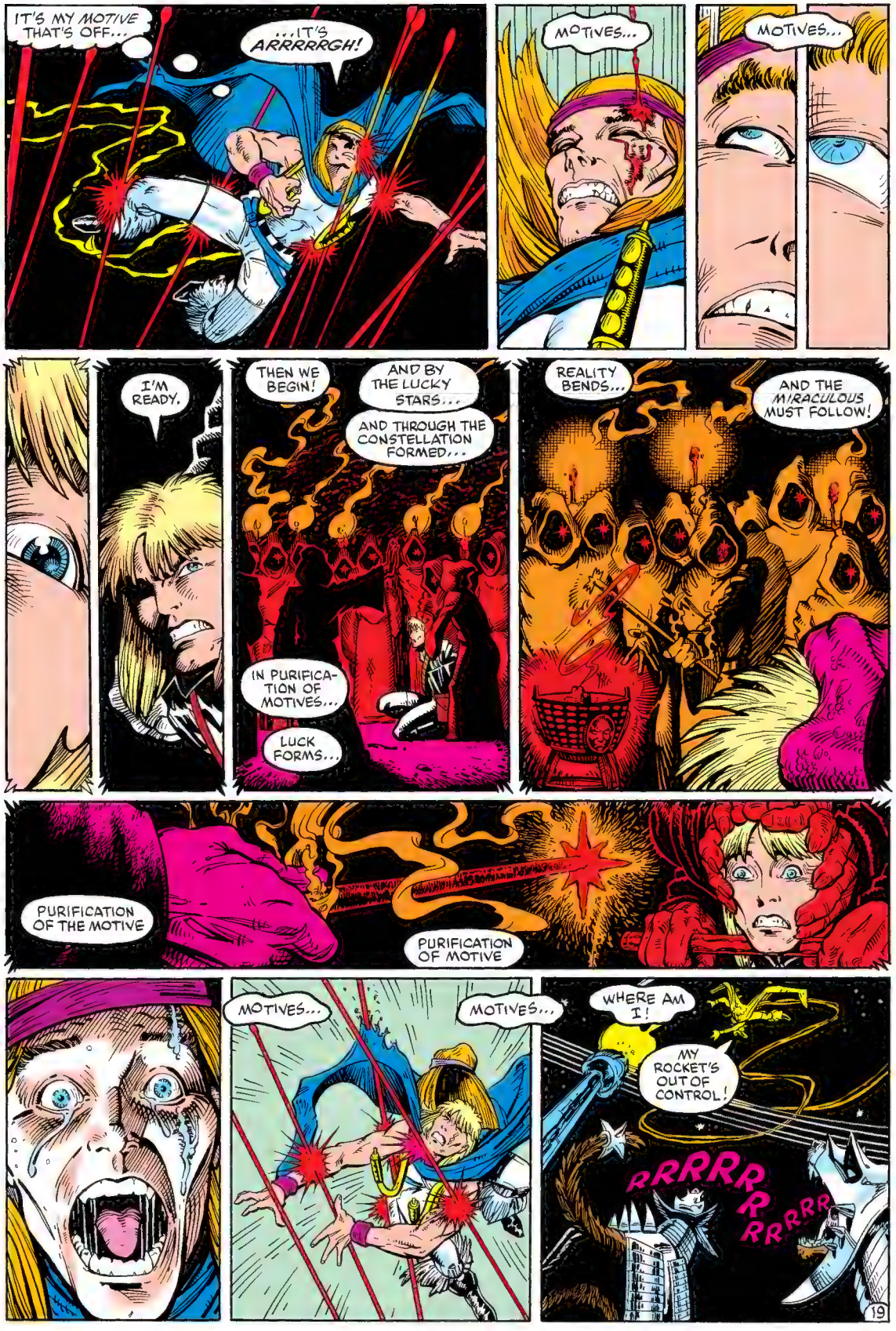

WHAT?!
OF COURSE I AM...?!
I'M JUST LIKE YOU!
CRBASH!
...FROM OUT BACK!
SOMEONE'S BEEN MESSIN' WITH OUR JET-PACKS!
IT'S...TOO ...QUIET OUT HERE...
HRKZZ
ZRRZZZK
KR
WE WERE ON OUR WAY BACK
WE WERE ALMOST THERE, LUCKY ONE...HATED ONE...
YOU CLOSED THE DOOR
FORCED US TO STAY HERE
WHERE IT'S WORSE THAN DEATH
TIME TO CLOSE THAT DOOR ON YOU TOO!
TOO MANY!
WHO'S THAT?
SOMEONE ELSE HERE?!
EEEAAAA!
KZZZRRR
SOMETHING'S RIPPING THROUGH THEM LIKE A BANSHEE!
SSSS
SSSSSSSS
SSSS
KZZRRIIPISSSIERRR
PUP! YOU GOT THEM ALL! PUP... YOU'RE DIFFERENT... BIGGER!
..PII
14

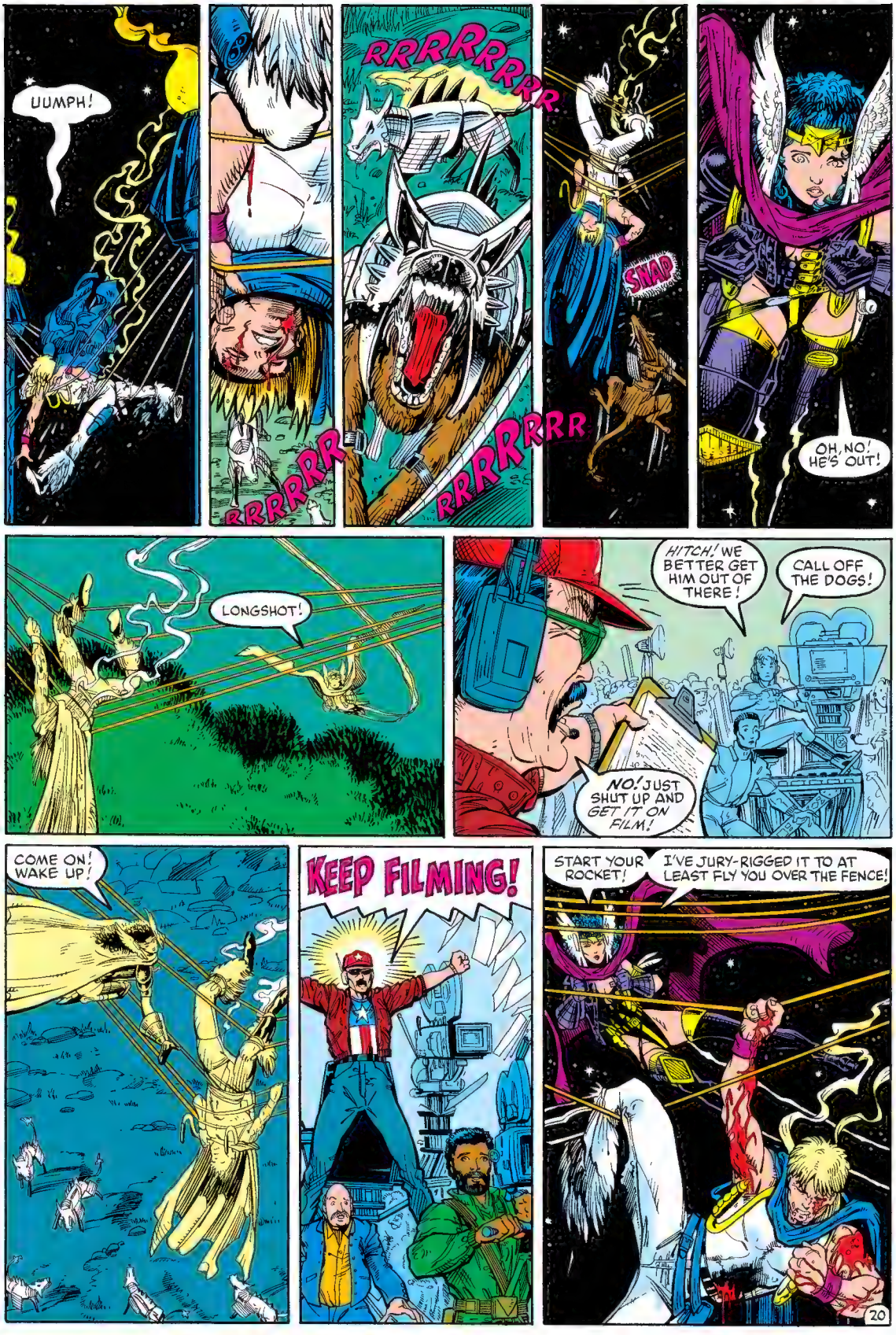

DIFFERENT?
HOW SO?
WHATCHA LOOKIN' AT ME LIKE THAT FOR?
COME ON IN!
I'M GOING TO GET SOME MONEY SOON, PUP!
WILL YOU SHOW ME HOW IT WORKS WHEN I GET IT?
GOT ANY FOOD?
THIS PLANET HAS THE BEST EATS IN THE GALAXY!
HEY! WHEN DID YOU LEARN HOW TO STAND UP ON TWO FEET!? YOU'RE FULL A SURPRISES!
YUP ;GULP;
KNOK KNOK
HI. I FELT BAD ABOUT LEAVING BEFORE...
RITA! COME ON IN!
'MEMBER MY PUPPY FRIEND I TOLD YOU ABOUT? HE SAYS...
"SAYS?" PUPPIES CAN'T TALK ... HEY!
THAT'S NO PUPPY!
THAT'S A MIDGET IN A FUR SUIT, ISN'T IT?
NO... HE'S REAL ALL RIGHT...
THEN HE'S NOT FROM THIS PLANET!
PUP... YOU GOT SOMETHIN' TO TELL ME?
WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
WOMEN! SAME IN EVERY DIMENSION... ALWAYS SPOILING THE FUN...
I'M YER PAL. WHAT MORE DO YA NEED TO KNOW?
WE WERE PALS BEFORE AN' WE'LL BE...
BEFORE WHAT? IF YOU'RE NOT FROM THIS EARTH, THEN NEITHER AM I!
AND YOU MUST KNOW WHO I AM!
YOU'VE BEEN HOLDIN' OUT...
A DEMON CAN'T EVEN FINISH HIS HOTDOG IN PEACE...
15

TELL ME NOW!
HE'S TOO *STRONG* AND I HAVEN'T *TAPPED* ENOUGH OF THIS PLANET'S POWER TO BEAT HIM YET.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TELL WHAT I KNOW ABOUT YOU.
I HATE YOU! THAT'S ALL I KNOW!
KPOW!
I'M STILL EVOLVING--I SEEM TO BE A MAGIC *MAGNET* ON THIS WORLD. I MUST WAIT TILL I TAP IT TO THE LIMIT.
THEN I'LL BE READY FOR HIM.
SO LONG, *CHUMP*. I'LL WAVE TO YOU FROM THE TOP!
WAIT!
GO AFTER HIM.
NO.
HE WAS MY ONE AND ONLY FRIEND, RITA. I LOVED THAT PUPPY. TRUSTED HIM.
WHY'D HE TURN ON ME?
HE WASN'T YOUR ONLY FRIEND...
I'M HERE.
SHE'S SO SWEET. BUT SO WAS HE.
I CAN'T GET CLOSE TO ANYBODY EVER AGAIN--'CAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW...
16


NEXT DAY, ON THE SET...
THIS IS THE BIG ONE! QUIET ON THE SET! RITA! LONGSHOT!-- THIS IS YOUR SCENE!
OUR HEROES ARE ABOUT TO FLY IN, PAST THE SLAVERING DOGS AND LASER DEFENSE SYSTEM, TO THE ROOF OF THE POWER PLANT.
WE'VE ALREADY SHOT THE INTERIOR SCENES WHERE THEY STEAL THE NUKES. SO JUST PICK THE GOODS UP ON THE ROOF, AND WE'LL FILM YOUR ESCAPE.
REMEMBER, YOU'RE SUICIDAL MANIACS ABOUT TO HOLD THE WORLD HOSTAGE. BUT YOU TWO SHOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM ACTING THE PART.
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT. I DON'T FEEL READY!
MAKE ME LOOK GOOD, RITA!
DON'T I ALWAYS?
READY ON THE SET!
RICOCHET! LONGSHOT! YOU'RE ON!
LIGHTS... CAMERA... YOU'RE ON, LONGSHOT!
NO! I'LL TELL YOU WHEN!
WHAT?! I'M THE DIRECTOR!
I SHOULD PROBABLY HUMOR HIM-- LIKE ANY OTHER CRAZY PERSON-- LONG AS I CAN HARNESS HIS MADNESS FOR THIS SHOT... AND GET IT ON FILM...
OKAY. THE WORLD WAITS ON YOU.
OKAY... ACTION!
HURRY! ROLL THE CAMERAS!
HEY, WAIT FOR ME!
17

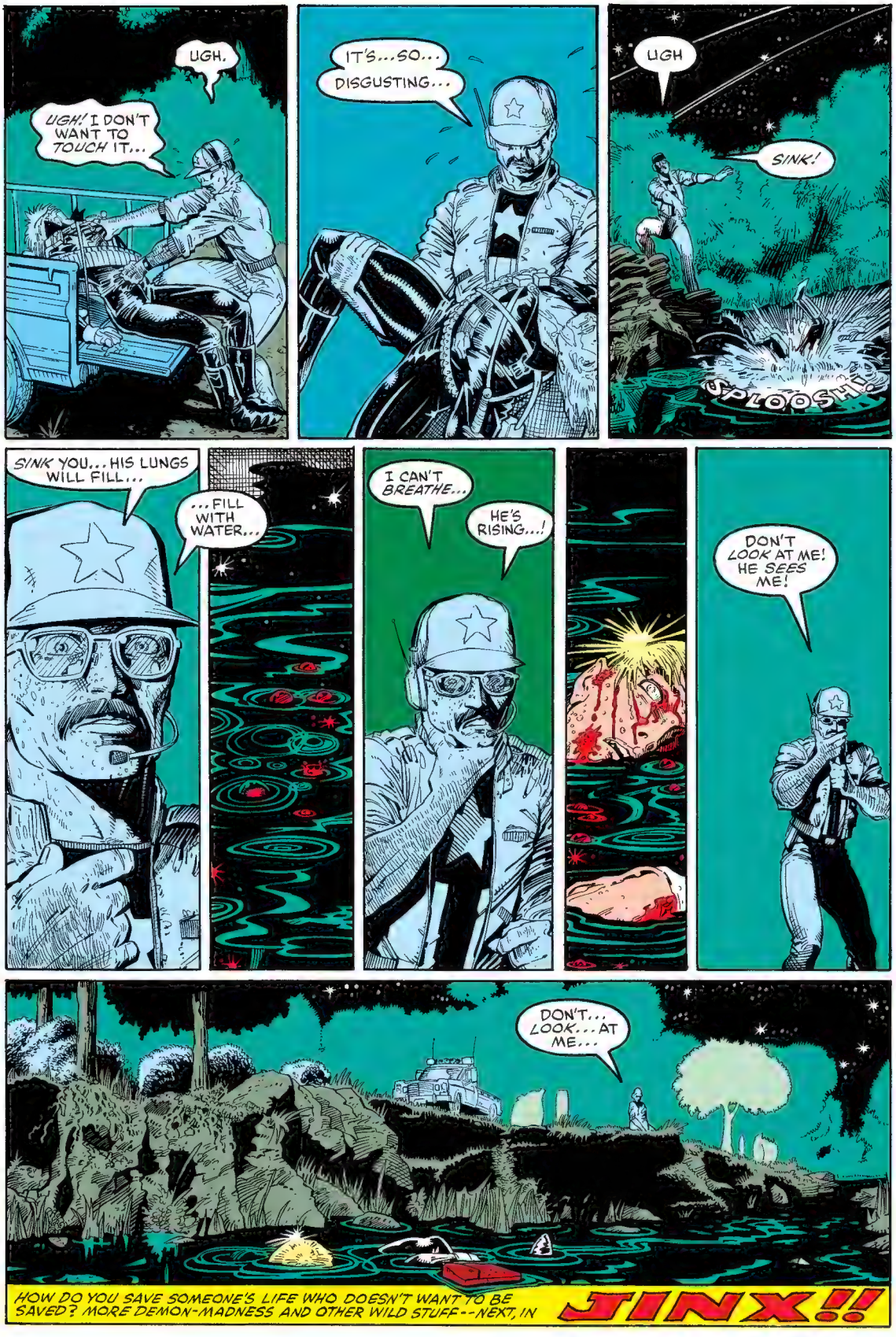

WATCH IT, LONGSHOT--THE LASERS ARE REAL, THEY CAN KILL!
SHOOT! HE'S ALREADY A BETTER FLYER THAN ME!
HOW'M I DOIN'?
COULD BE BETTER-- TIGHTEN UP YOUR TURNS!
DARNED IF I'LL ADMIT TO HIM HOW GOOD HE IS!
WE MADE IT! SOME KICK, HUH? CAN'T BEAT THE THRILL, HUH?
SOMETHING'S... OFF, I DON'T QUITE... HAVE IT.
HAVE WHAT?
IT.
DON'T BE SO CRYPTIC, EXPLAIN! YOU HAVE GREAT SKILL UP THERE.
NO, YOU HAVE SKILL. I HAVE--SOMETHING ELSE. PEOPLE SAY I'M... LUCKY.
MAYBE, BUT YOU'RE ALSO SILLY.
READY ON THE SET!
WE BETTER GO...
IS MONEY A GOOD MOTIVE TO DO SOMETHING?
SURE!...WELL, NAH, MAYBE NOT, IT'S A SELFISH MOTIVE, I GUESS.
I'M SO CONFUSED-- LET'S JUST GO!
ALL RIGHT.
GEEZ, HE'S FICKLE.
RESTART THE LASERS!
RRRIGHT.
IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE, HUMAN.


IT'S MY MOTIVE THAT'S OFF...
...IT'S ARRRRRGH!
MOTIVES...
MOTIVES...
I'M READY.
THEN WE BEGIN!
AND BY THE LUCKY STARS...
AND THROUGH THE CONSTELLATION FORMED...
IN PURIFICATION OF MOTIVES...
LUCK FORMS...
REALITY BENDS...
AND THE MIRACULOUS MUST FOLLOW!
PURIFICATION OF THE MOTIVE
PURIFICATION OF MOTIVE
MOTIVES...
MOTIVES...
WHERE AM I!
MY ROCKET'S OUT OF CONTROL!
RRRRR
R
RRRRR


UUMPH!
RRRRRRRR.
RRRRRR
RRRRRRRR
SNAP
OH, NO! HE'S OUT!
LONGSHOT!
HITCH! WE BETTER GET HIM OUT OF THERE!
CALL OFF THE DOGS!
NO! JUST SHUT UP AND GET IT ON FILM!
COME ON! WAKE UP!
KEEP FILMING!
START YOUR ROCKET!
I'VE JURY-RIGGED IT TO AT LEAST FLY YOU OVER THE FENCE!

COME ON! WHERE'S THAT LUCK OF YOURS!?
IT'S GONE!
I LOST IT!
KRASH!
NO! IT ...CAN'T BE...
ALWAYS KNEW IT'D HAPPEN TO ME ONE DAY...BUT TO SEE IT...OH, LONGSHOT, ALL SMASHED!
HITCH! I THINK HE'S DEAD. OR ALMOST...
GET HIM TO MY TRUCK--I'LL RUSH HIM TO THE HOSPITAL!
BUT GET THAT COSTUME OFF HIM, FIRST!
21

BLAST! THAT CONTRACT HE SIGNED IS ILLEGAL! HE COULD SUE THE PANTS OFFA ME--AND IF HE DIES...
ALL RIGHT, I'M OFF!
HEY, GET OUT OF THE TRUCK! YOU TOO, RITA!
I'LL DO THIS ALONE.
WHAT'S HE UP TO...
I COULD GET CHARGED WITH MANSLAUGHTER!
OH, BLAST, WHAT HAVE I DONE!?
WHAT'S HE UP TO..?
GOT TO HIDE IT... GET RID OF IT...
I'LL TAKE IT TO THE RIVER... DUMP IT...
THEY'RE PROBABLY FOLLOWING...
BLUE RIVER
7 MILES
DID RITA KNOW? ...OF COURSE SHE DID...
DUMP IT... GOTTA DUMP IT...


UGH.
UGH! I DON'T WANT TO TOUCH IT...
IT'S...SO... DISGUSTING...
UGH
SINK!
SPLOOSH!
SINK YOU... HIS LUNGS WILL FILL...
...FILL WITH WATER...
I CAN'T BREATHE...
HE'S RISING...!
DON'T LOOK AT ME! HE SEES ME!
DON'T... LOOK... AT ME...
HOW DO YOU SAVE SOMEONE'S LIFE WHO DOESN'T WANT TO BE SAVED? MORE DEMON-MADNESS AND OTHER WILD STUFF--NEXT, IN
JINX!!

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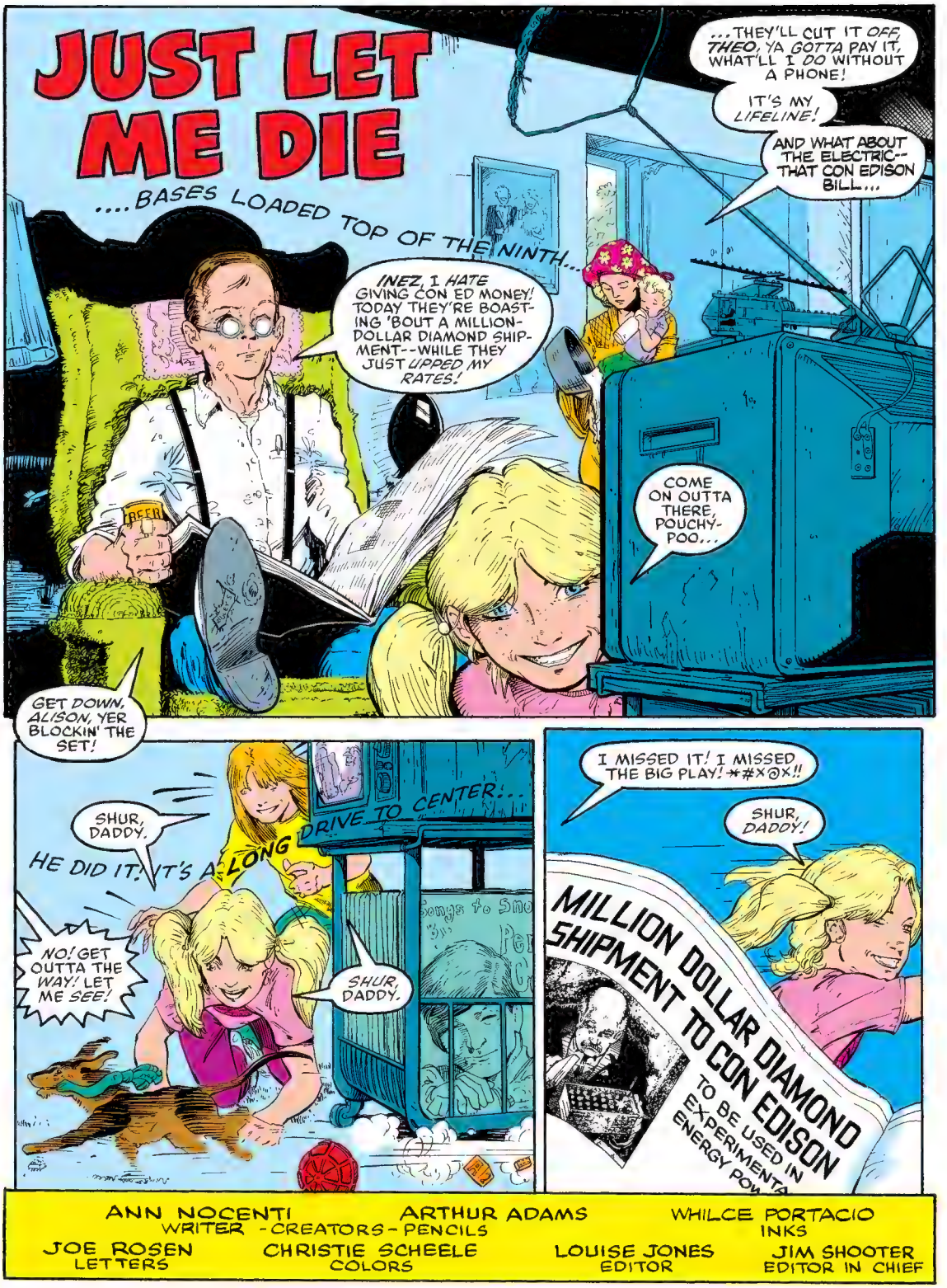
#3 IN A SIX-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
LONGSHOT
ARTHUR ADAMS
7-22-84


JUST LET ME DIE
....BASES LOADED TOP OF THE NINTH...
...THEY'LL CUT IT OFF, THEO, YA GOTTA PAY IT, WHAT'LL I DO WITHOUT A PHONE!
IT'S MY LIFELINE!
AND WHAT ABOUT THE ELECTRIC--THAT CON EDISON BILL...
INEZ, I HATE GIVING CON ED MONEY! TODAY THEY'RE BOASTING 'BOUT A MILLION-DOLLAR DIAMOND SHIPMENT--WHILE THEY JUST UPPED MY RATES!
BEER
COME ON OUTTA THERE, POUCHY-POO...
GET DOWN, ALISON, YER BLOCKIN' THE SET!
SHUR, DADDY.
HE DID IT! IT'S A LONG DRIVE TO CENTER...
NO! GET OUTTA THE WAY! LET ME SEE!
SHUR, DADDY.
I MISSED IT! I MISSED THE BIG PLAY! *#X@X!!
SHUR, DADDY!
MILLION DOLLAR DIAMOND SHIPMENT TO CON EDISON
TO BE USED IN EXPERIMENTA
ENERGY POW

ANN NOCENTI
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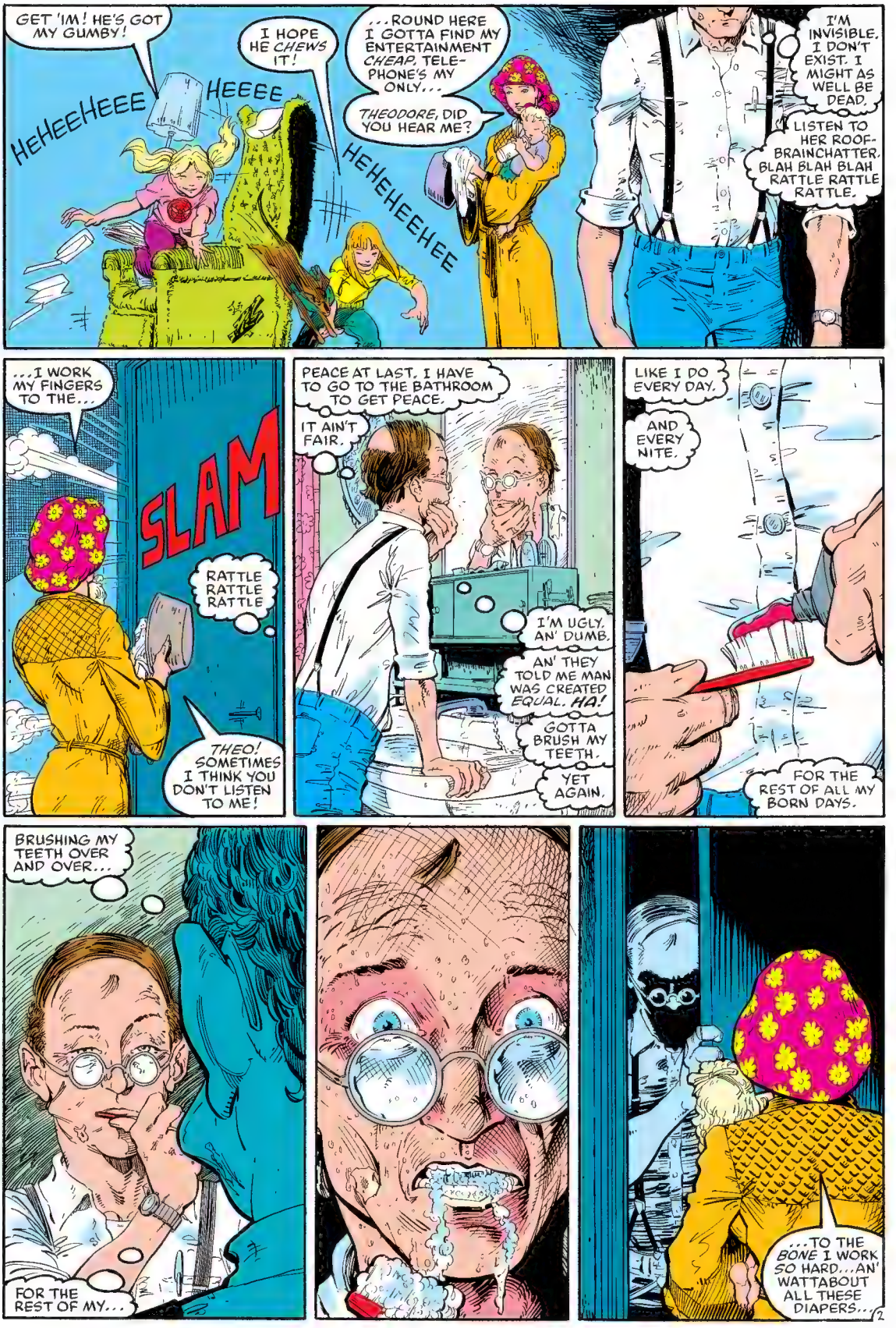
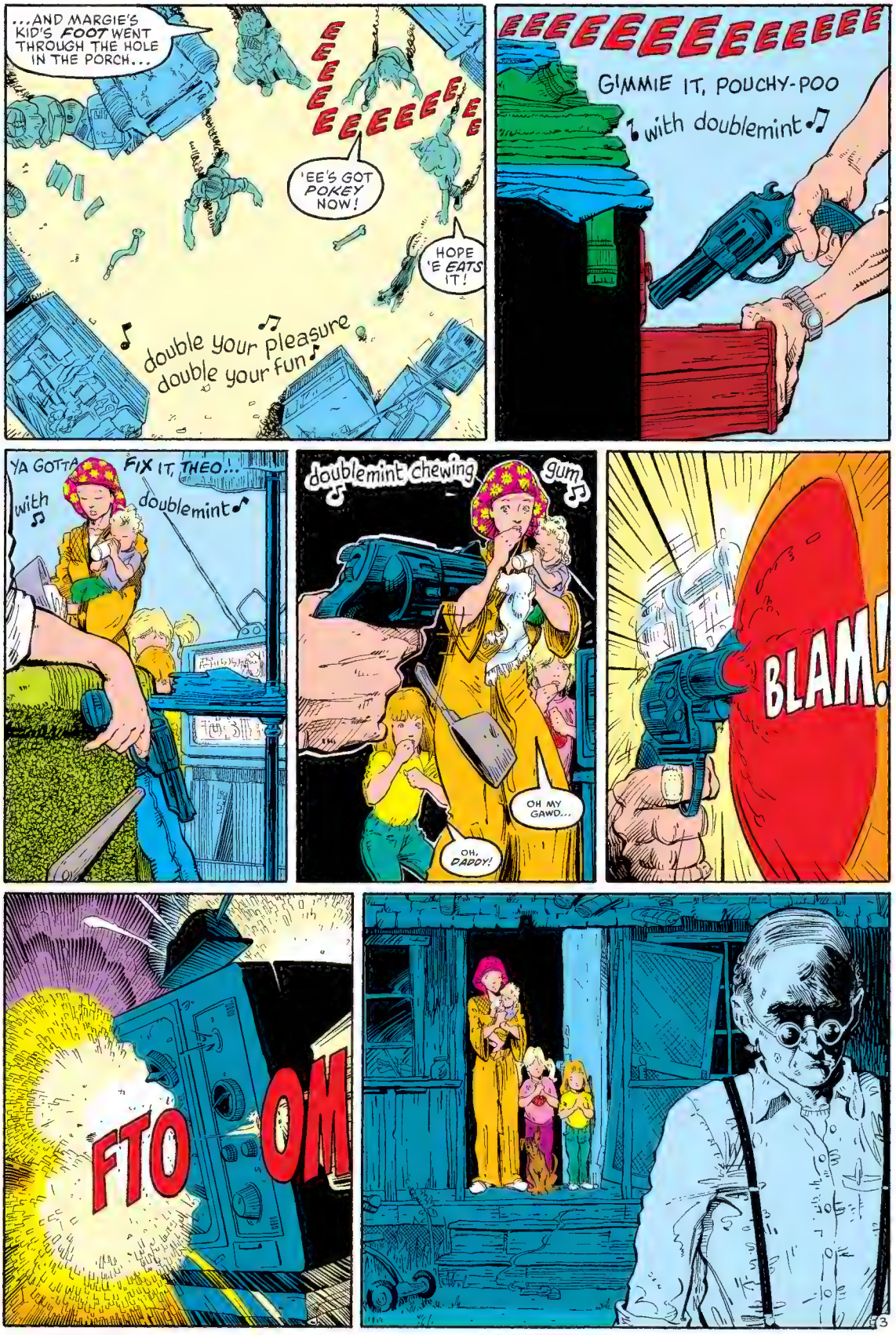
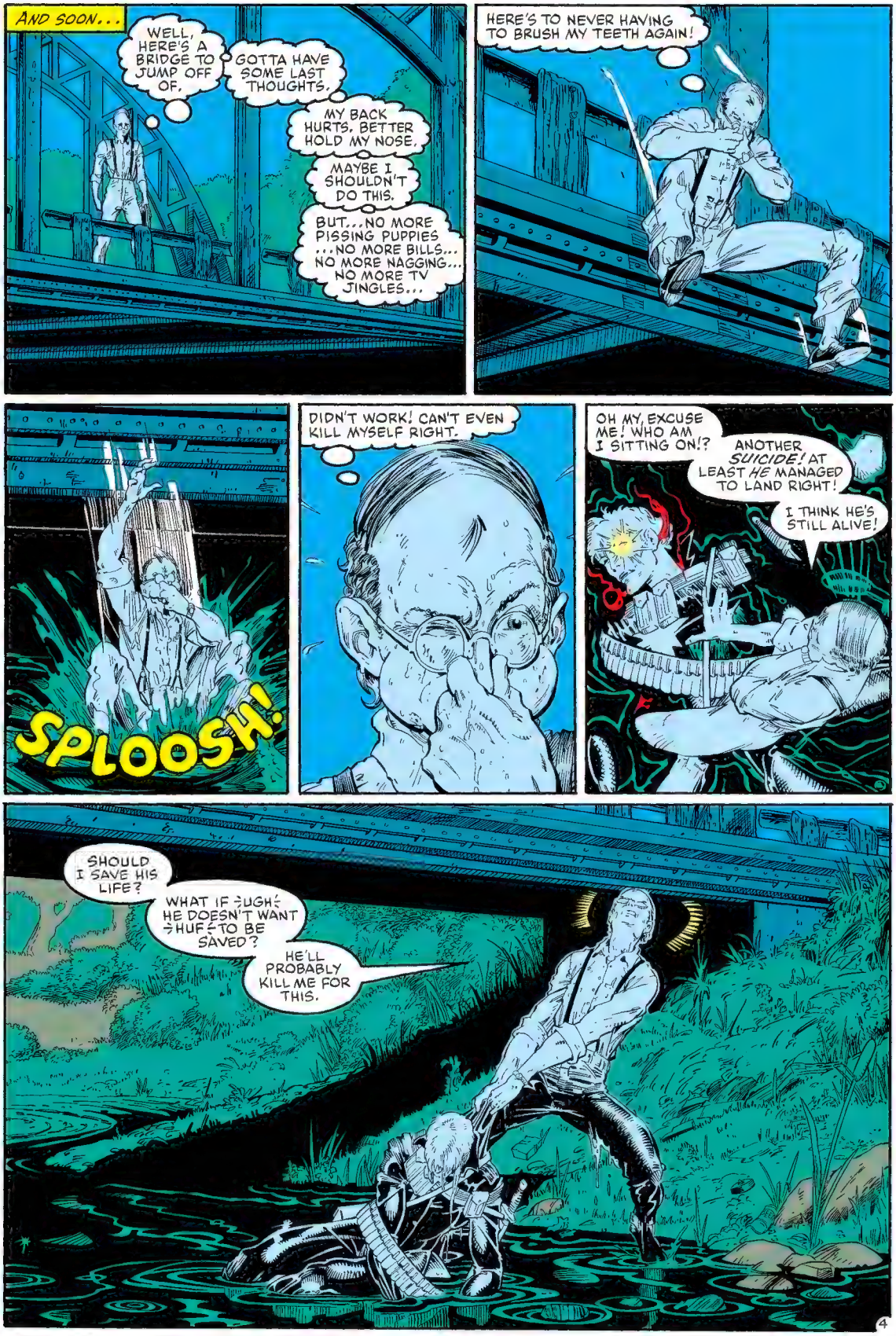
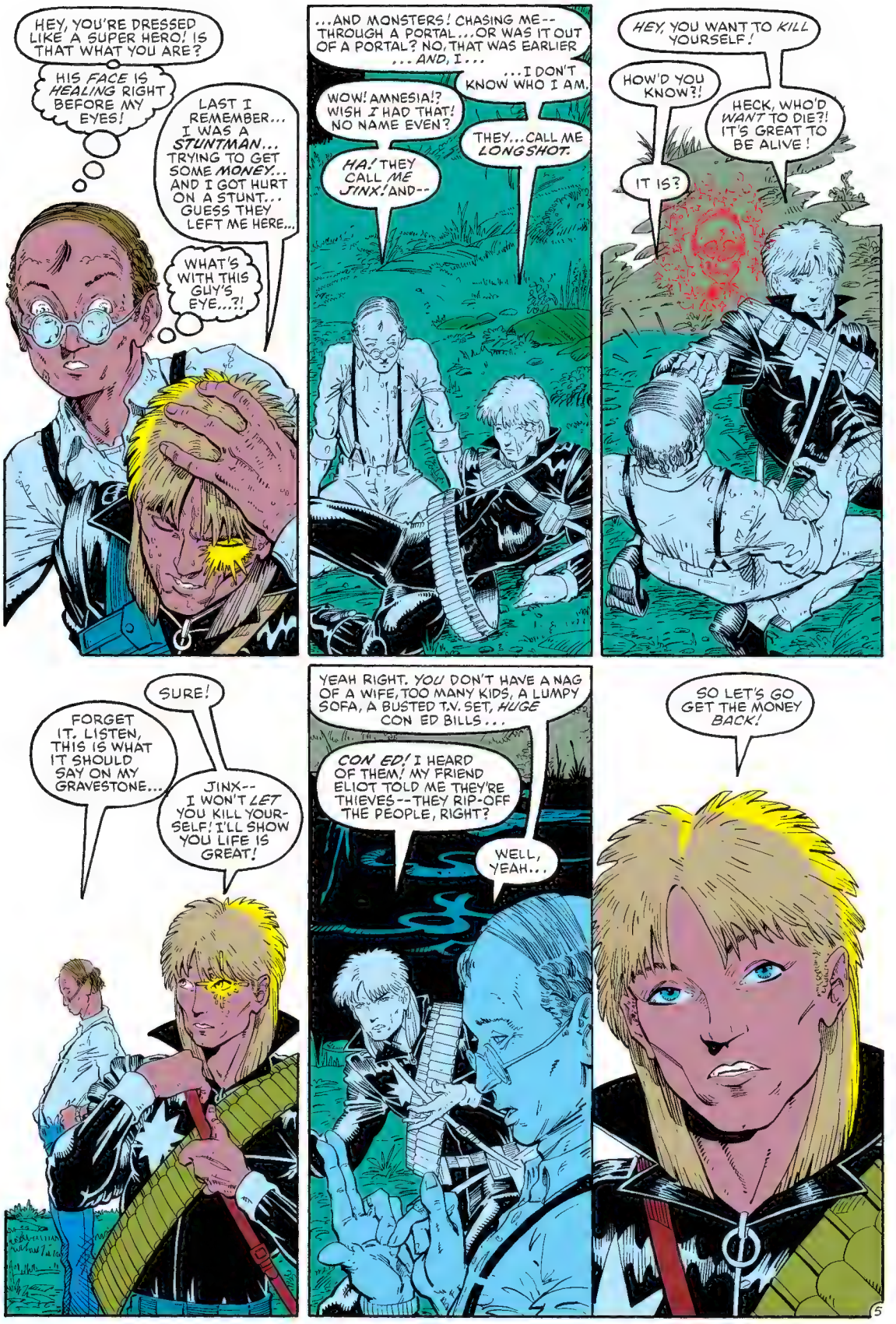
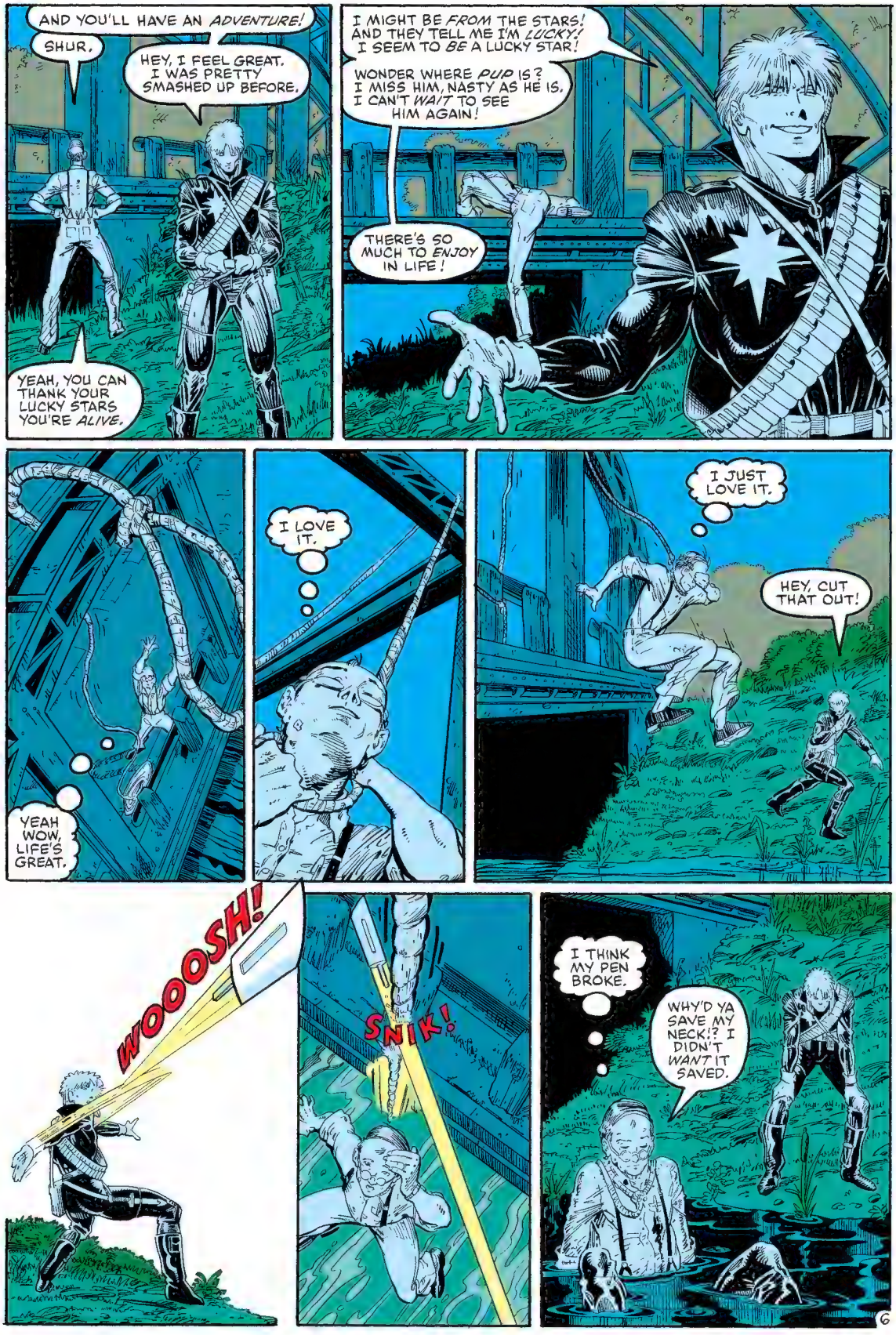
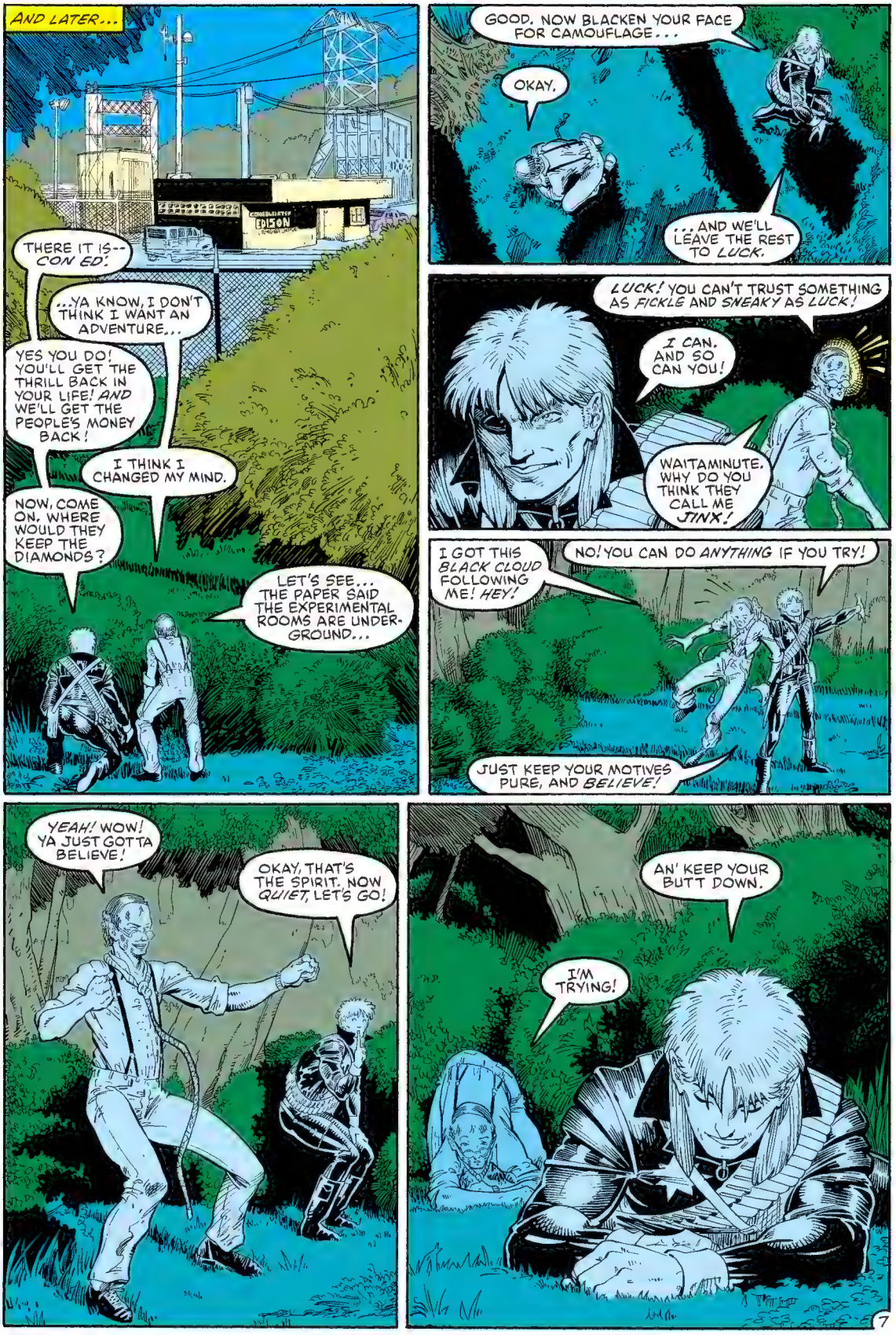

GET 'IM! HE'S GOT MY GUMBY!
HEHEEHEEE
HEEEE
I HOPE HE CHEWS IT!
...ROUND HERE I GOTTA FIND MY ENTERTAINMENT CHEAP. TELE-PHONE'S MY ONLY...
THEODORE, DID YOU HEAR ME?
HEHEHEEHEE
I'M INVISIBLE. I DON'T EXIST. I MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD.
LISTEN TO HER ROOF-BRAINCHATTER. BLAH BLAH BLAH RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE.
...I WORK MY FINGERS TO THE...
SLAM
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE
THEO! SOMETIMES I THINK YOU DON'T LISTEN TO ME!
PEACE AT LAST. I HAVE TO GO TO THE BATHROOM TO GET PEACE.
IT AIN'T FAIR.
I'M UGLY, AN' DUMB.
AN' THEY TOLD ME MAN WAS CREATED EQUAL. HA!
GOTTA BRUSH MY TEETH.
YET AGAIN.
LIKE I DO EVERY DAY.
AND EVERY NITE.
FOR THE REST OF ALL MY BORN DAYS.
BRUSHING MY TEETH OVER AND OVER...
FOR THE REST OF MY...
...TO THE BONE I WORK SO HARD...AN' WATTABOUT ALL THESE DIAPERS...

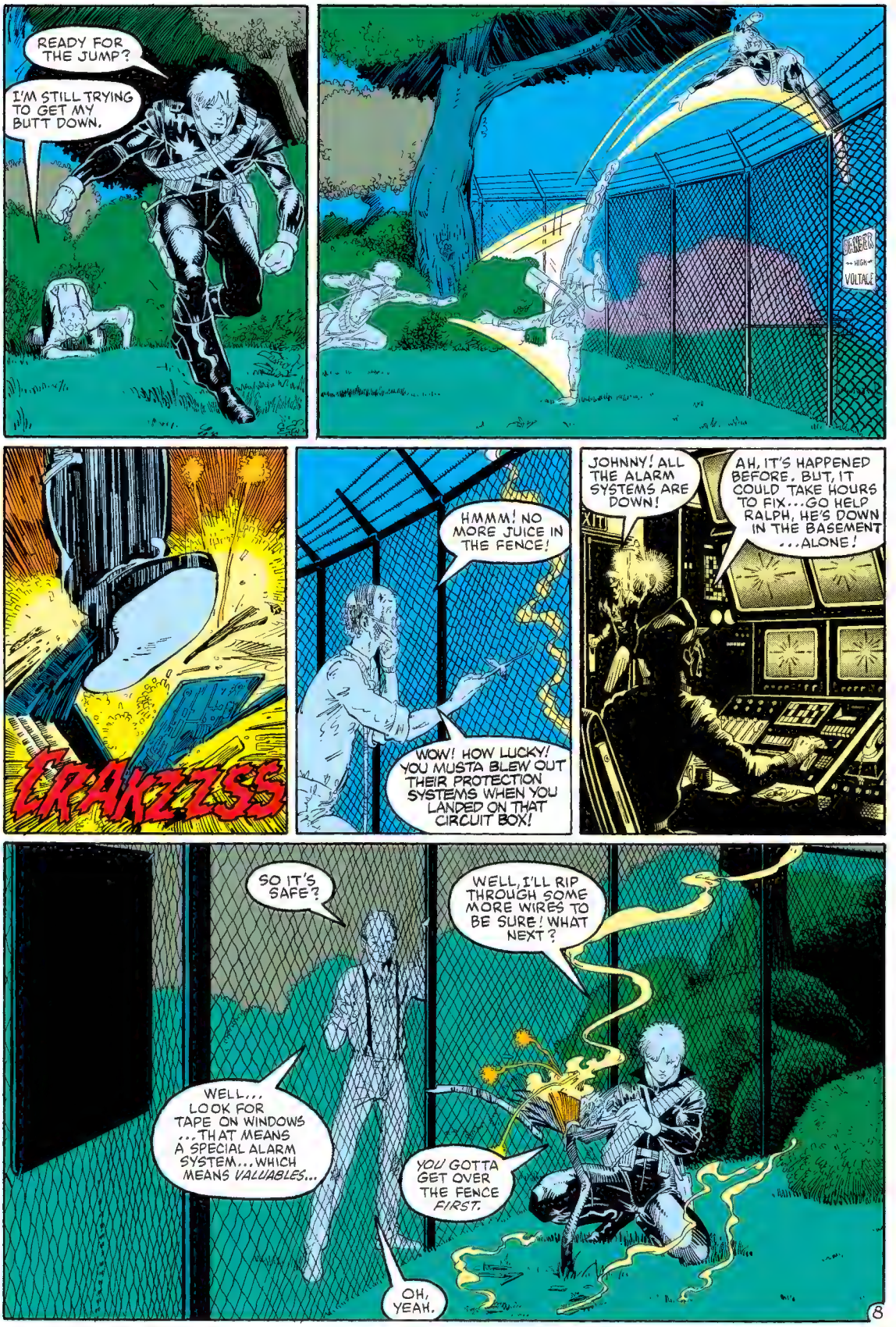

...AND MARGIE'S KID'S FOOT WENT THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE PORCH...
EEEEEEEEEEEE
'EE'S GOT POKEY NOW!
HOPE 'E EATS IT!
double your pleasure double your fun
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
GIMMIE IT, POUCHY-POO with doublemint
YA GOTTA FIX IT, THEO!.. with doublemint
doublemint chewing gum
OH MY GAWD...
OH, DADDY!
BLAM!
FTO OM

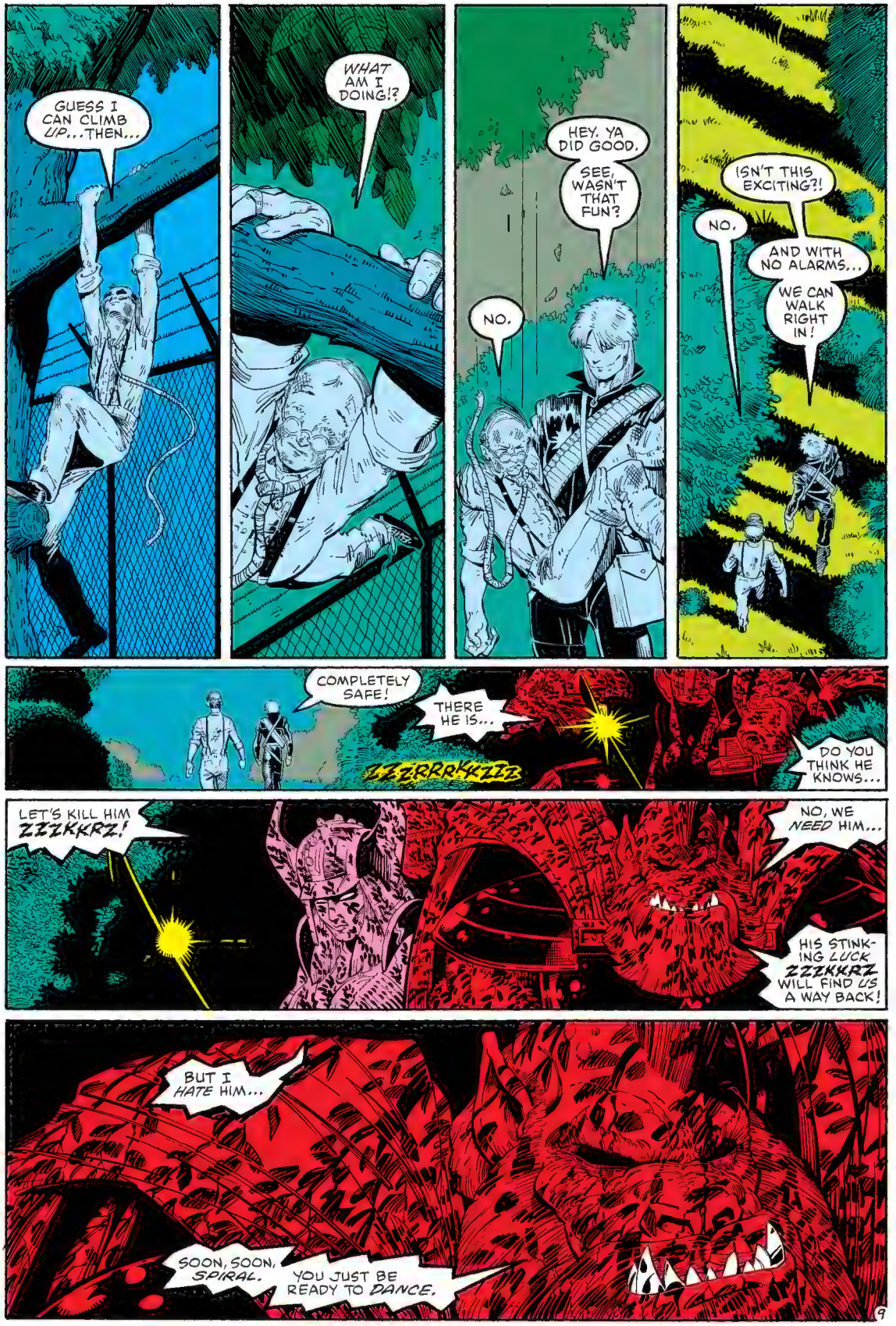

AND SOON...
WELL, HERE'S A BRIDGE TO JUMP OFF OF.
GOTTA HAVE SOME LAST THOUGHTS.
MY BACK HURTS. BETTER HOLD MY NOSE.
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T DO THIS.
BUT...NO MORE PISSING PUPPIES ...NO MORE BILLS... NO MORE NAGGING... NO MORE TV JINGLES...
HERE'S TO NEVER HAVING TO BRUSH MY TEETH AGAIN!
SPLOOSH!
DIDN'T WORK! CAN'T EVEN KILL MYSELF RIGHT.
OH MY, EXCUSE ME! WHO AM I SITTING ON!?
ANOTHER SUICIDE! AT LEAST HE MANAGED TO LAND RIGHT!
I THINK HE'S STILL ALIVE!
SHOULD I SAVE HIS LIFE?
WHAT IF ÷UGH÷ HE DOESN'T WANT ÷HUF÷ TO BE SAVED?
HE'LL PROBABLY KILL ME FOR THIS.

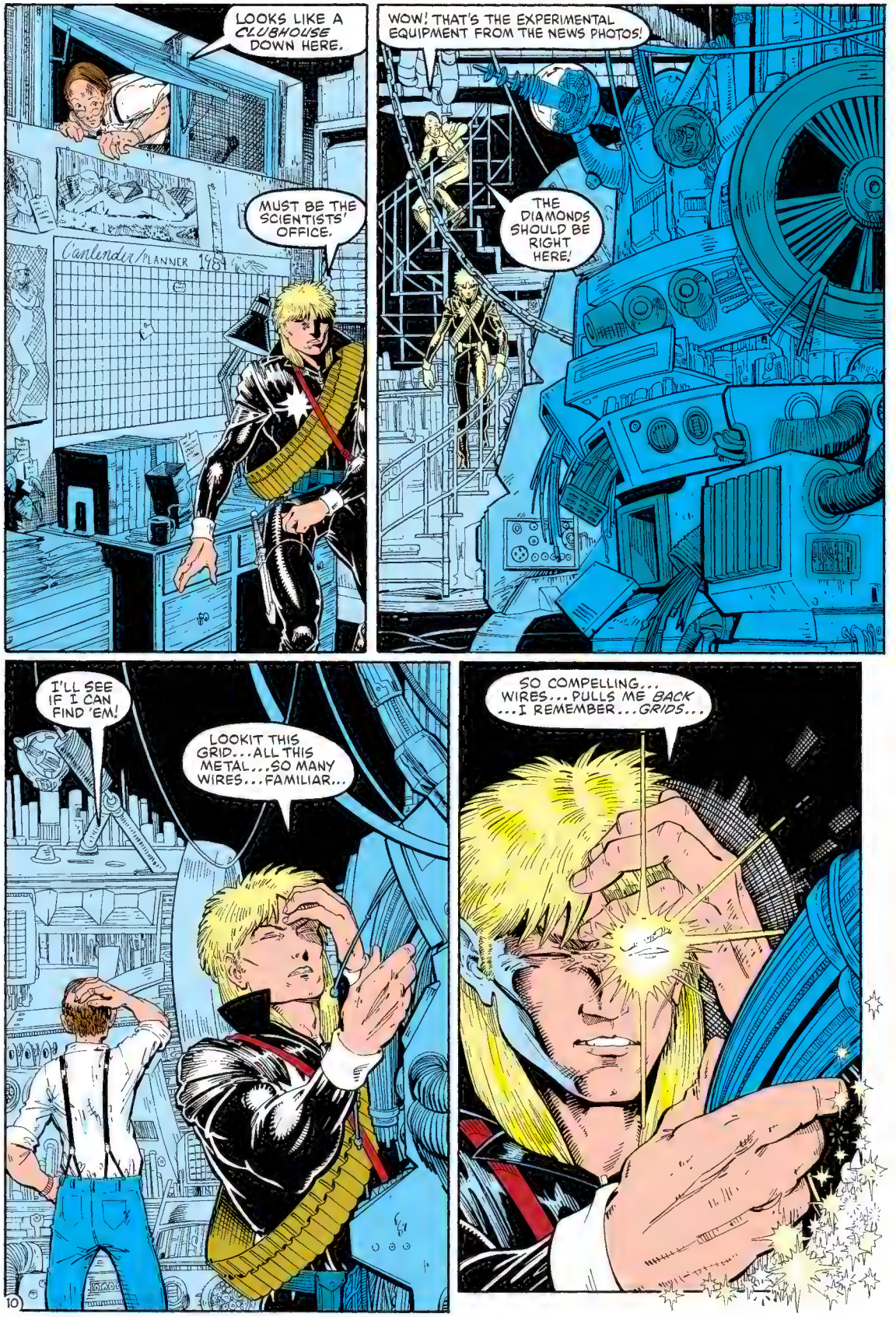

HEY, YOU'RE DRESSED LIKE A SUPER HERO! IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE?
HIS FACE IS HEALING RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES!
LAST I REMEMBER... I WAS A STUNTMAN... TRYING TO GET SOME MONEY... AND I GOT HURT ON A STUNT... GUESS THEY LEFT ME HERE...
WHAT'S WITH THIS GUY'S EYE...?!
...AND MONSTERS! CHASING ME--THROUGH A PORTAL...OR WAS IT OUT OF A PORTAL? NO, THAT WAS EARLIER ...AND, I...
...I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM.
WOW! AMNESIA!? WISH I HAD THAT! NO NAME EVEN?
THEY...CALL ME LONGSHOT.
HA! THEY CALL ME JINX! AND--
HEY, YOU WANT TO KILL YOURSELF!
HOW'D YOU KNOW?!
HECK, WHO'D WANT TO DIE?! IT'S GREAT TO BE ALIVE!
IT IS?
SURE!
FORGET IT. LISTEN, THIS IS WHAT IT SHOULD SAY ON MY GRAVESTONE...
JINX-- I WON'T LET YOU KILL YOURSELF! I'LL SHOW YOU LIFE IS GREAT!
YEAH RIGHT. YOU DON'T HAVE A NAG OF A WIFE, TOO MANY KIDS, A LUMPY SOFA, A BUSTED T.V. SET, HUGE CON ED BILLS...
CON ED! I HEARD OF THEM! MY FRIEND ELIOT TOLD ME THEY'RE THIEVES--THEY RIP-OFF THE PEOPLE, RIGHT?
WELL, YEAH...
SO LET'S GO GET THE MONEY BACK!

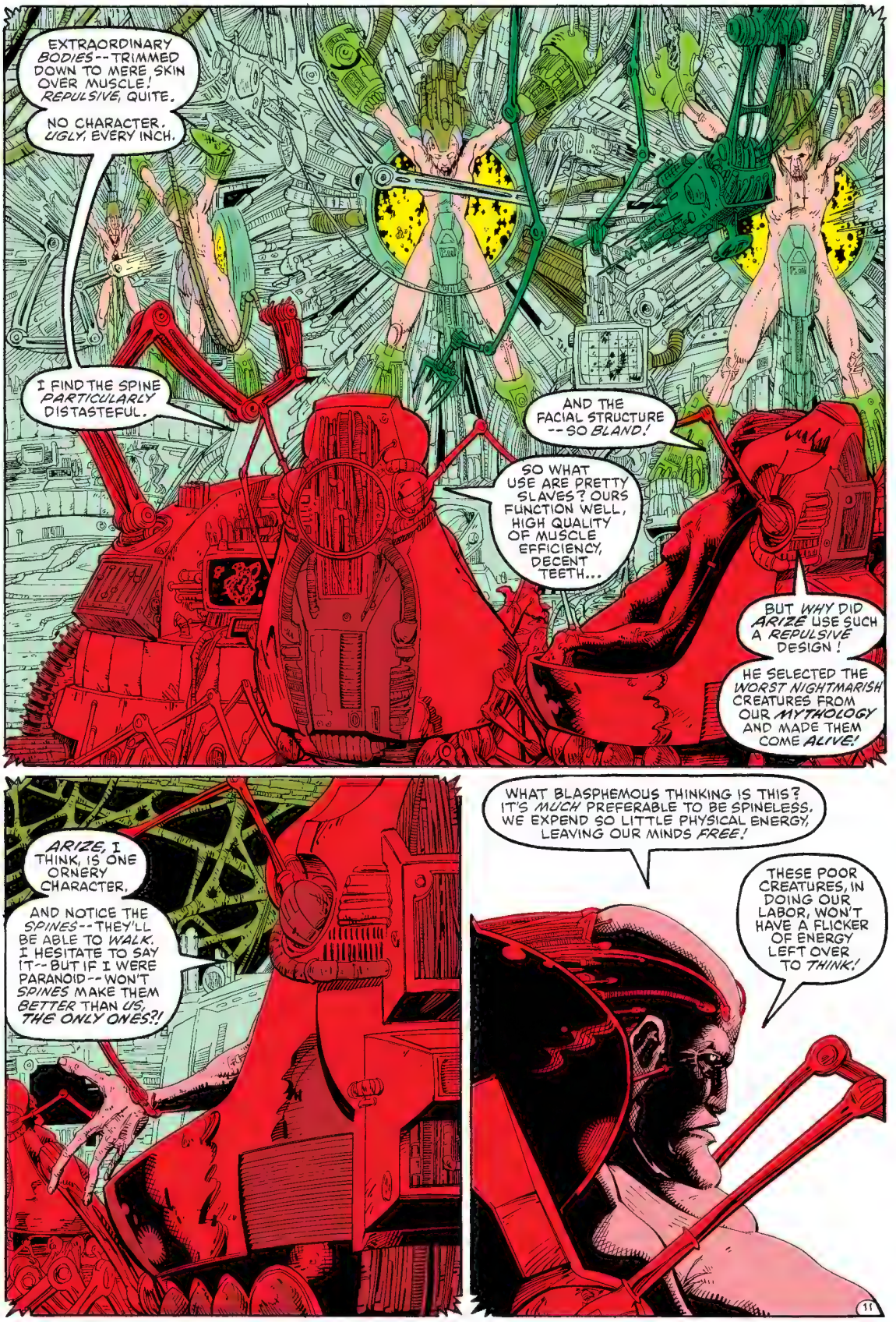

AND YOU'LL HAVE AN ADVENTURE!
SHUR.
HEY, I FEEL GREAT. I WAS PRETTY SMASHED UP BEFORE.
YEAH, YOU CAN THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS YOU'RE ALIVE.
I MIGHT BE FROM THE STARS! AND THEY TELL ME I'M LUCKY! I SEEM TO BE A LUCKY STAR!
WONDER WHERE PUD IS? I MISS HIM, NASTY AS HE IS. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!
THERE'S SO MUCH TO ENJOY IN LIFE!
YEAH WOW, LIFE'S GREAT.
I LOVE IT.
I JUST LOVE IT.
HEY, CUT THAT OUT!
WOOOOSH!
SNIK!
I THINK MY PEN BROKE.
WHY'D YA SAVE MY NECK!? I DIDN'T WANT IT SAVED.
G

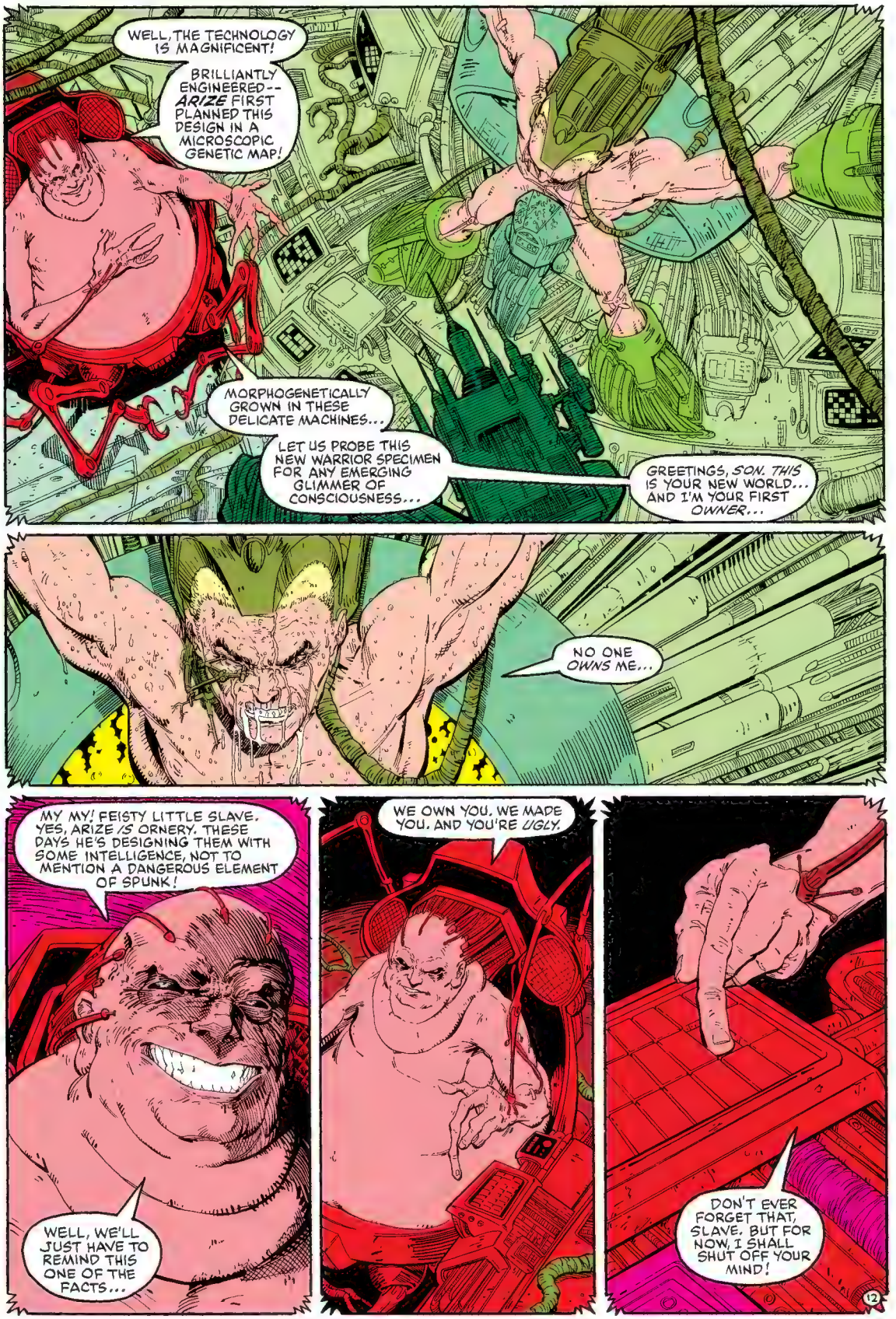

AND LATER...
CON EDISON
THERE IT IS-- CON ED!
...YA KNOW, I DON'T THINK I WANT AN ADVENTURE...
YES YOU DO! YOU'LL GET THE THRILL BACK IN YOUR LIFE! AND WE'LL GET THE PEOPLE'S MONEY BACK!
I THINK I CHANGED MY MIND.
NOW, COME ON, WHERE WOULD THEY KEEP THE DIAMONDS?
LET'S SEE... THE PAPER SAID THE EXPERIMENTAL ROOMS ARE UNDER-GROUND...
GOOD. NOW BLACKEN YOUR FACE FOR CAMOUFLAGE...
OKAY.
...AND WE'LL LEAVE THE REST TO LUCK.
LUCK! YOU CAN'T TRUST SOMETHING AS FICKLE AND SNEAKY AS LUCK!
I CAN. AND SO CAN YOU!
WAITAMINUTE. WHY DO YOU THINK THEY CALL ME JINX!
I GOT THIS BLACK CLOUD FOLLOWING ME! HEY!
NO! YOU CAN DO ANYTHING IF YOU TRY!
JUST KEEP YOUR MOTIVES PURE, AND BELIEVE!
YEAH! WOW! YA JUST GOTTA BELIEVE!
OKAY, THAT'S THE SPIRIT. NOW QUIET, LET'S GO!
AN' KEEP YOUR BUTT DOWN.
I'M TRYING!


READY FOR THE JUMP?
I'M STILL TRYING TO GET MY BUTT DOWN.
DANGER ~HIGH~ VOLTAGE
KRAKZZSS
HMMM! NO MORE JUICE IN THE FENCE!
WOW! HOW LUCKY! YOU MUSTA BLEW OUT THEIR PROTECTION SYSTEMS WHEN YOU LANDED ON THAT CIRCUIT BOX!
JOHNNY! ALL THE ALARM SYSTEMS ARE DOWN!
AH, IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE. BUT, IT COULD TAKE HOURS TO FIX...GO HELP RALPH, HE'S DOWN IN THE BASEMENT ...ALONE!
EXIT
SO IT'S SAFE?
WELL, I'LL RIP THROUGH SOME MORE WIRES TO BE SURE! WHAT NEXT?
WELL... LOOK FOR TAPE ON WINDOWS ...THAT MEANS A SPECIAL ALARM SYSTEM...WHICH MEANS VALUABLES...
YOU GOTTA GET OVER THE FENCE FIRST.
OH, YEAH.

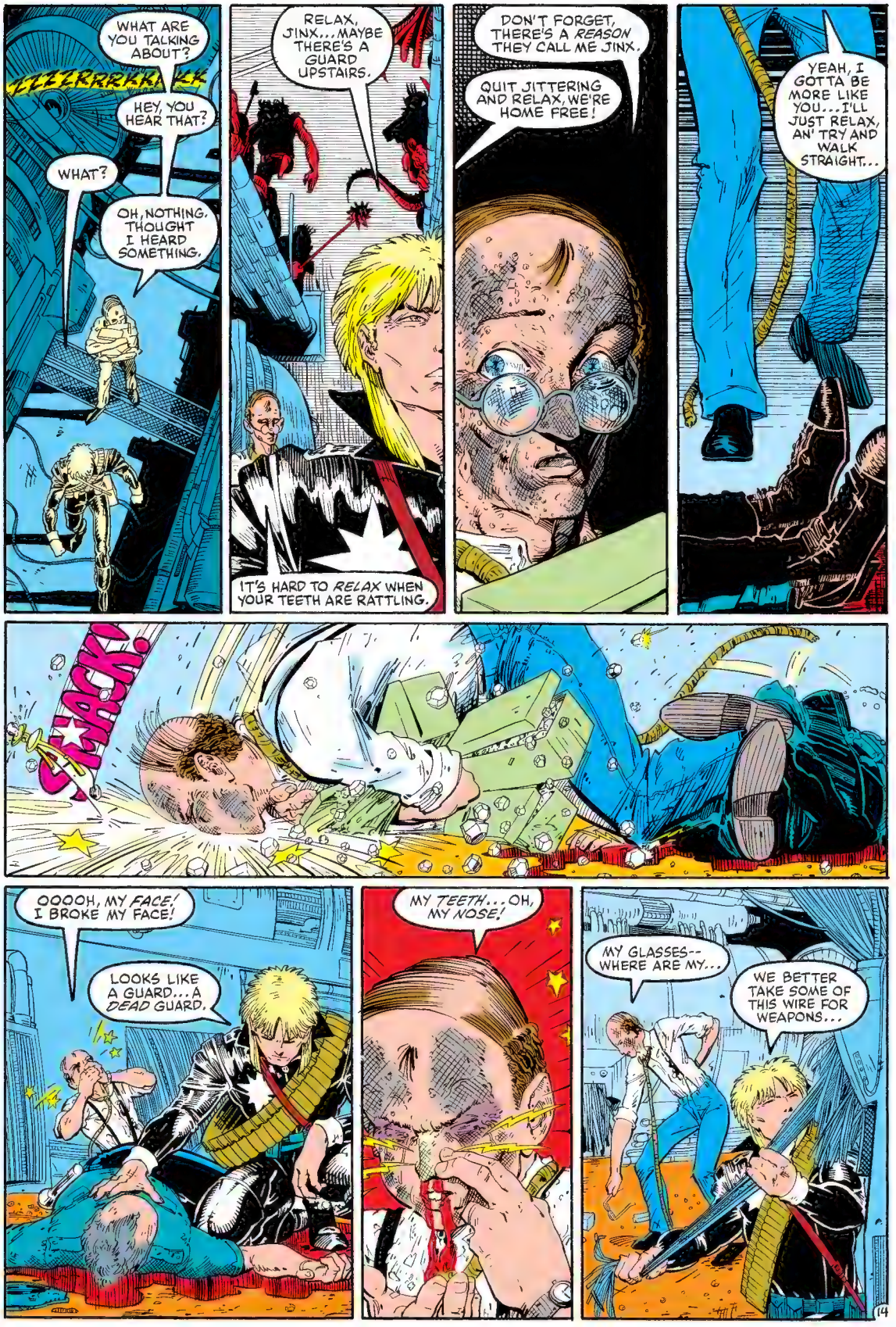

GUESS I CAN CLIMB UP...THEN...
WHAT AM I DOING!?
HEY. YA DID GOOD.
SEE, WASN'T THAT FUN?
NO.
ISN'T THIS EXCITING?!
NO.
AND WITH NO ALARMS...
WE CAN WALK RIGHT IN!
COMPLETELY SAFE!
THERE HE IS...
ZZZRRRKKIIZ
DO YOU THINK HE KNOWS...
LET'S KILL HIM ZZIKKRZ!
NO, WE NEED HIM...
HIS STINKING LUCK ZZIKKRZ WILL FIND US A WAY BACK!
BUT I HATE HIM...
SOON, SOON, SPIRAL.
YOU JUST BE READY TO DANCE.

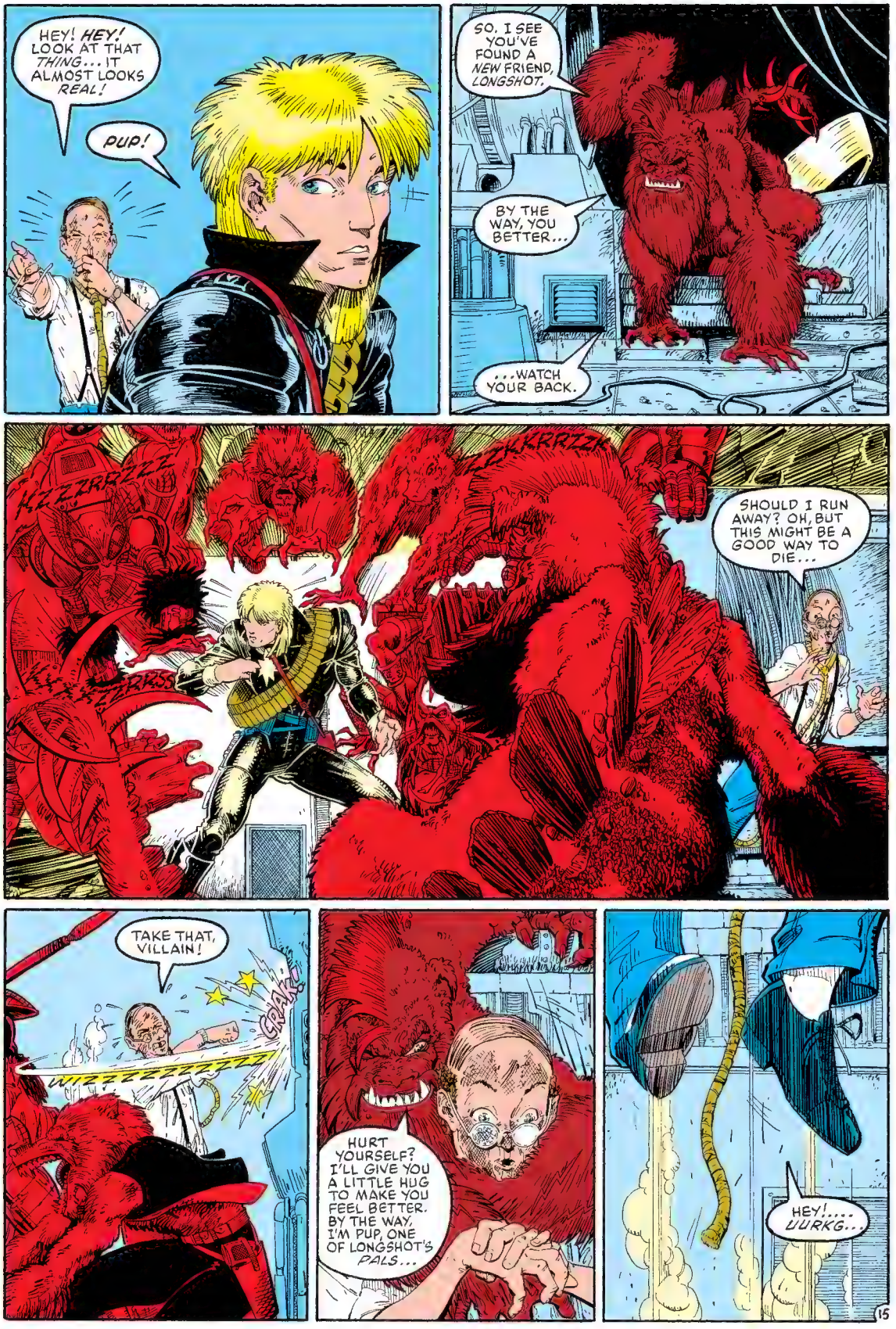

LOOKS LIKE A CLUBHOUSE DOWN HERE.
MUST BE THE SCIENTISTS' OFFICE.
Calendar/PLANNER 1981
WOW! THAT'S THE EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT FROM THE NEWS PHOTOS!
THE DIAMONDS SHOULD BE RIGHT HERE!
I'LL SEE IF I CAN FIND 'EM!
LOOKIT THIS GRID...ALL THIS METAL...SO MANY WIRES...FAMILIAR...
SO COMPELLING... WIRES...PULLS ME BACK ...I REMEMBER...GRIDS...

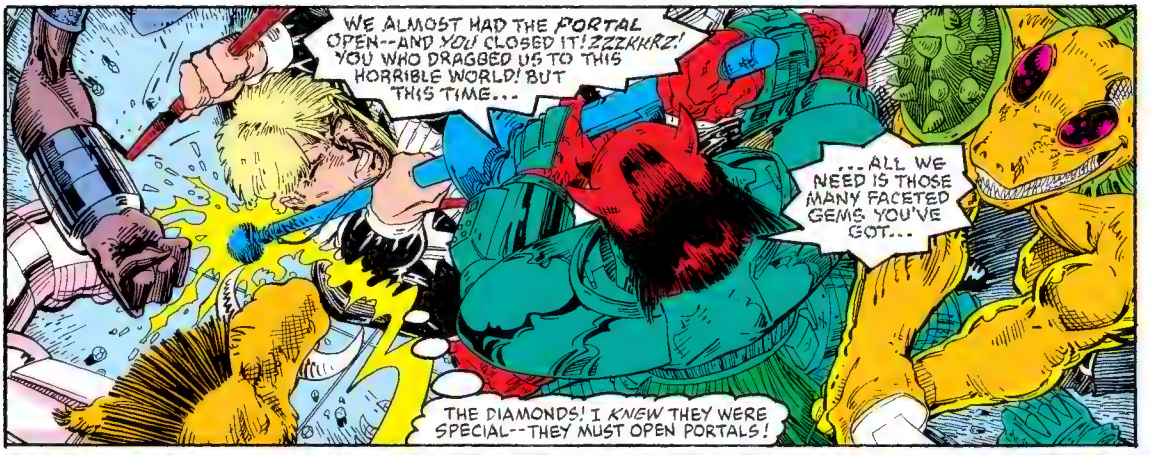

EXTRAORDINARY *BODIES*--TRIMMED DOWN TO MERE SKIN OVER MUSCLE! *REPULSIVE*, QUITE.
NO CHARACTER. *UGLY*, EVERY INCH.
I FIND THE SPINE *PARTICULARLY* DISTASTEFUL.
AND THE FACIAL STRUCTURE --SO *BLAND!*
SO WHAT USE ARE PRETTY SLAVES? OURS FUNCTION WELL, HIGH QUALITY OF MUSCLE, EFFICIENCY, DECENT TEETH...
BUT *WHY* DID *ARIZE* USE SUCH A *REPULSIVE* DESIGN!
HE SELECTED THE *WORST NIGHTMARISH* CREATURES FROM OUR *MYTHOLOGY* AND MADE THEM COME *ALIVE!*
ARIZE, I THINK, IS ONE ORNERY CHARACTER.
AND NOTICE THE *SPINES*--THEY'LL BE ABLE TO *WALK*. I HESITATE TO SAY IT--BUT IF I WERE PARANOID--WON'T *SPINES* MAKE THEM *BETTER* THAN *US*, *THE ONLY ONES?!*
WHAT BLASPHEMOUS THINKING IS THIS? IT'S *MUCH* PREFERABLE TO BE SPINELESS, WE EXPEND SO LITTLE PHYSICAL ENERGY, LEAVING OUR MINDS *FREE!*
THESE POOR CREATURES, IN DOING OUR LABOR, WON'T HAVE A FLICKER OF ENERGY LEFT OVER TO *THINK!*


WELL, THE TECHNOLOGY IS MAGNIFICENT!
BRILLIANTLY ENGINEERED-- *ARIZE* FIRST PLANNED THIS DESIGN IN A MICROSCOPIC GENETIC MAP!
MORPHOGENETICALLY GROWN IN THESE DELICATE MACHINES...
LET US PROBE THIS NEW WARRIOR SPECIMEN FOR ANY EMERGING GLIMMER OF CONSCIOUSNESS...
GREETINGS, *SON. THIS* IS YOUR NEW WORLD... AND I'M YOUR FIRST *OWNER*...
NO ONE *OWNS* ME...
MY MY! FEISTY LITTLE SLAVE. YES, ARIZE *IS* ORNERY. THESE DAYS HE'S DESIGNING THEM WITH SOME INTELLIGENCE, NOT TO MENTION A DANGEROUS ELEMENT OF SPUNK!
WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO REMIND THIS ONE OF THE FACTS...
WE OWN YOU. WE MADE YOU. AND YOU'RE *UGLY*.
DON'T EVER FORGET THAT, SLAVE. BUT FOR NOW, I SHALL SHUT OFF YOUR MIND!

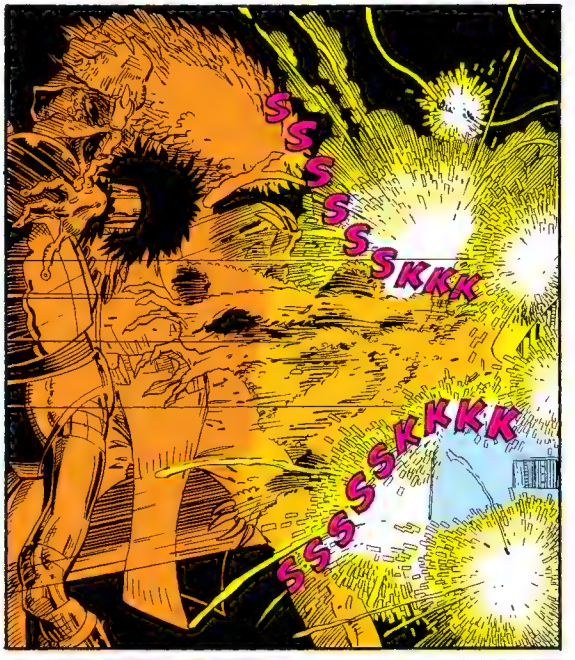
SHUT OFF MY...
JINX! WHO CREATED US? WHO BUILT US?
CREATED? BUILT? NO ONE... WE'RE *BORN*. WHAT ARE YOU, CRAZY?
WELL, I GUESS *GOD* MADE US.
REALLY... IS HE OUR RULER?
I DON'T KNOW! WELL, I GUESS TO *SOME* PEOPLE HE IS.
DOES HE LOOK LIKE US?
WELL... *YEAH*, THEY SAY HE CREATED US IN HIS OWN IMAGE... SO I GUESS HE'S JUST LIKE US...
KLLZZRRRZZLL
CONFUSED LIKE WE ARE...
A LITTLE PSYCHOTIC, PROBABLY...
HEY! I FOUND THE DIAMONDS! NOW WE CAN GET OUTTA HERE!
HMMM... SOMETHING *SPECIAL* ABOUT THESE ... STONES...
I READ... I SEE... SOMETHING *FAMILIAR*, AN *OPENING* OF SOME SORT-- BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND... *YES*. THESE GEMS *ARE* SPECIAL.
SURE ARE! THEY'RE WORTH MILLIONS! YOU CAN BUY A LOTTA SPECIAL WITH *THAT!*
NO, ANOTHER ...AN *OLDER* USE...


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ZZZZRRRKK KK
HEY, YOU HEAR THAT?
WHAT?
OH, NOTHING. THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING.
RELAX, JINX... MAYBE THERE'S A GUARD UPSTAIRS.
IT'S HARD TO *RELAX* WHEN YOUR TEETH ARE RATTLING.
DON'T FORGET, THERE'S A *REASON* THEY CALL ME JINX.
QUIT JITTERING AND RELAX, WE'RE HOME FREE!
YEAH, I GOTTA BE MORE LIKE YOU... I'LL JUST RELAX, AN' TRY AND WALK STRAIGHT...
SMACK!
OOOOH, MY *FACE*! I BROKE MY FACE!
LOOKS LIKE A GUARD... A *DEAD* GUARD.
MY *TEETH*... OH, MY *NOSE*!
MY GLASSES-- WHERE ARE MY...
WE BETTER TAKE SOME OF THIS WIRE FOR WEAPONS...


HEY! HEY! LOOK AT THAT THING... IT ALMOST LOOKS REAL!
PUP!
SO. I SEE YOU'VE FOUND A NEW FRIEND, LONGSHOT.
BY THE WAY, YOU BETTER...
...WATCH YOUR BACK.
KZZRRZZ
KZZRRZZ
KZZRRZZ
SHOULD I RUN AWAY? OH, BUT THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD WAY TO DIE...
TAKE THAT, VILLAIN!
WHIZZZZZZZZZZ
CRAK!
HURT YOURSELF? I'LL GIVE YOU A LITTLE HUG TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER. BY THE WAY, I'M PUP, ONE OF LONGSHOT'S PALS...
HEY!..... UURKG...

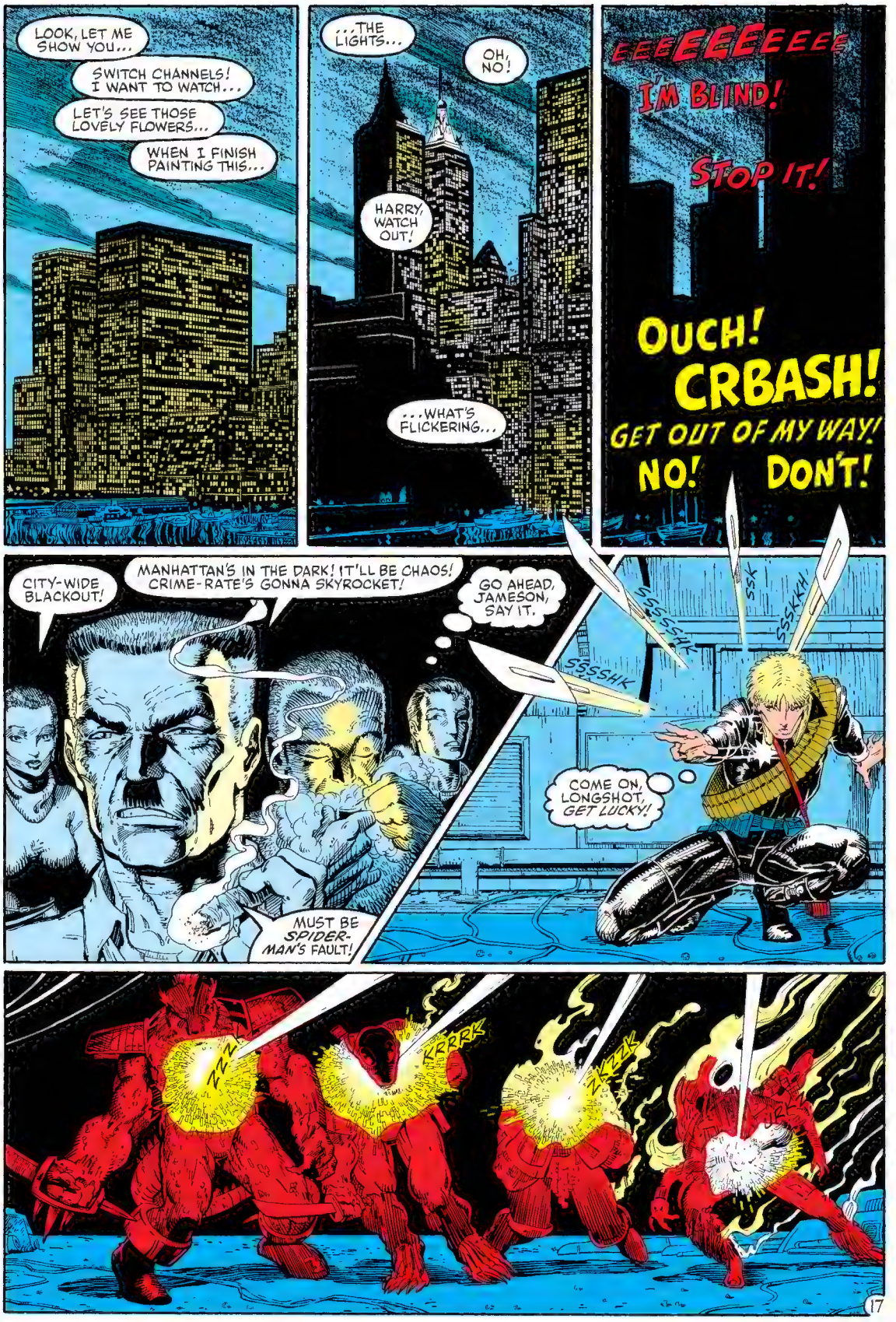

WE ALMOST HAD THE PORTAL OPEN--AND YOU CLOSED IT! ZZZKHRZ! YOU WHO DRAGGED US TO THIS HORRIBLE WORLD! BUT THIS TIME...
...ALL WE NEED IS THOSE MANY FACETED GEMS YOU'VE GOT...
THE DIAMONDS! I KNEW THEY WERE SPECIAL--THEY MUST OPEN PORTALS!

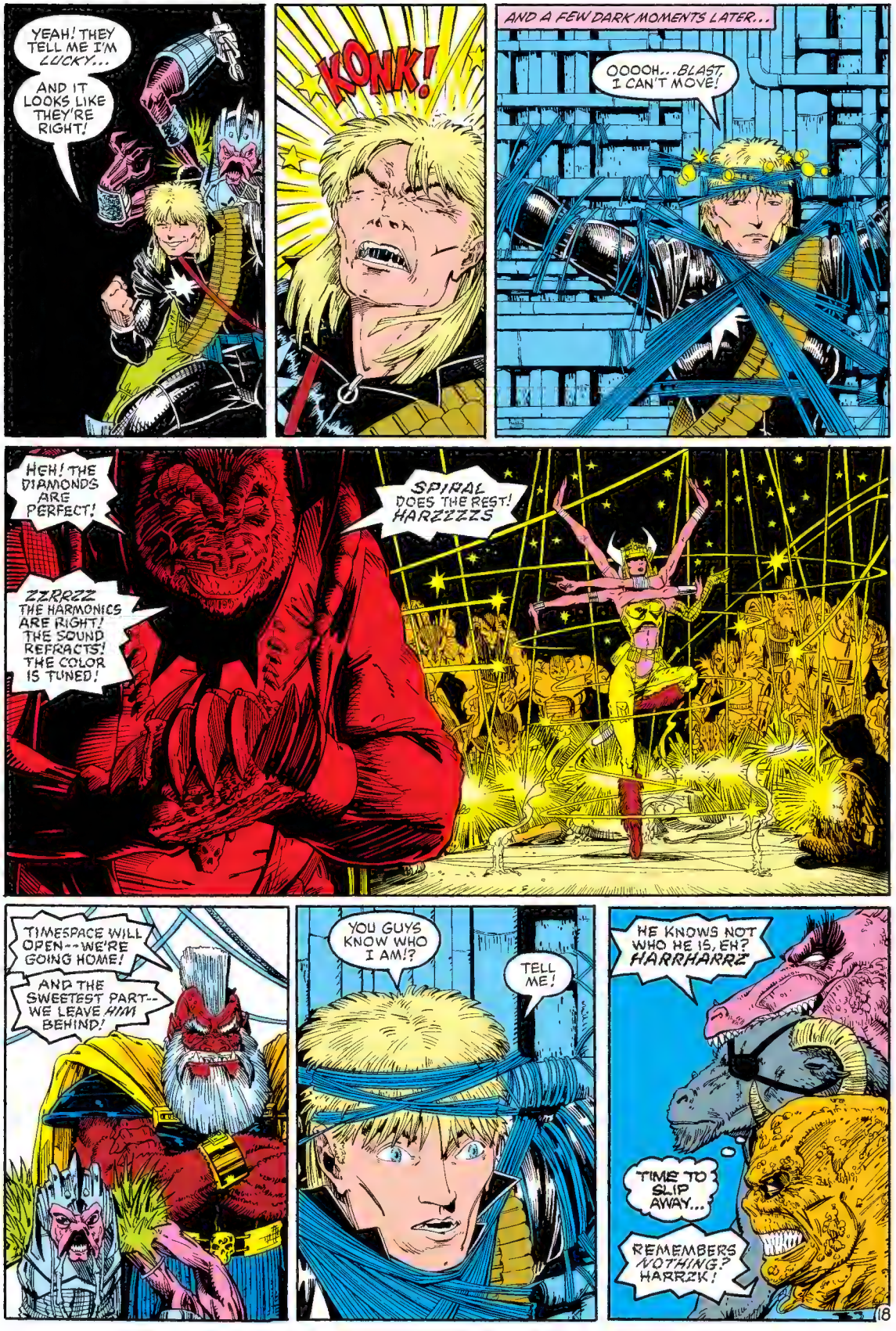
LOOK KKHZZZRR AT HIS UGLY FACE!
RUIN IT! RUIN HIS FACE!
BUMP!
UUKZP...

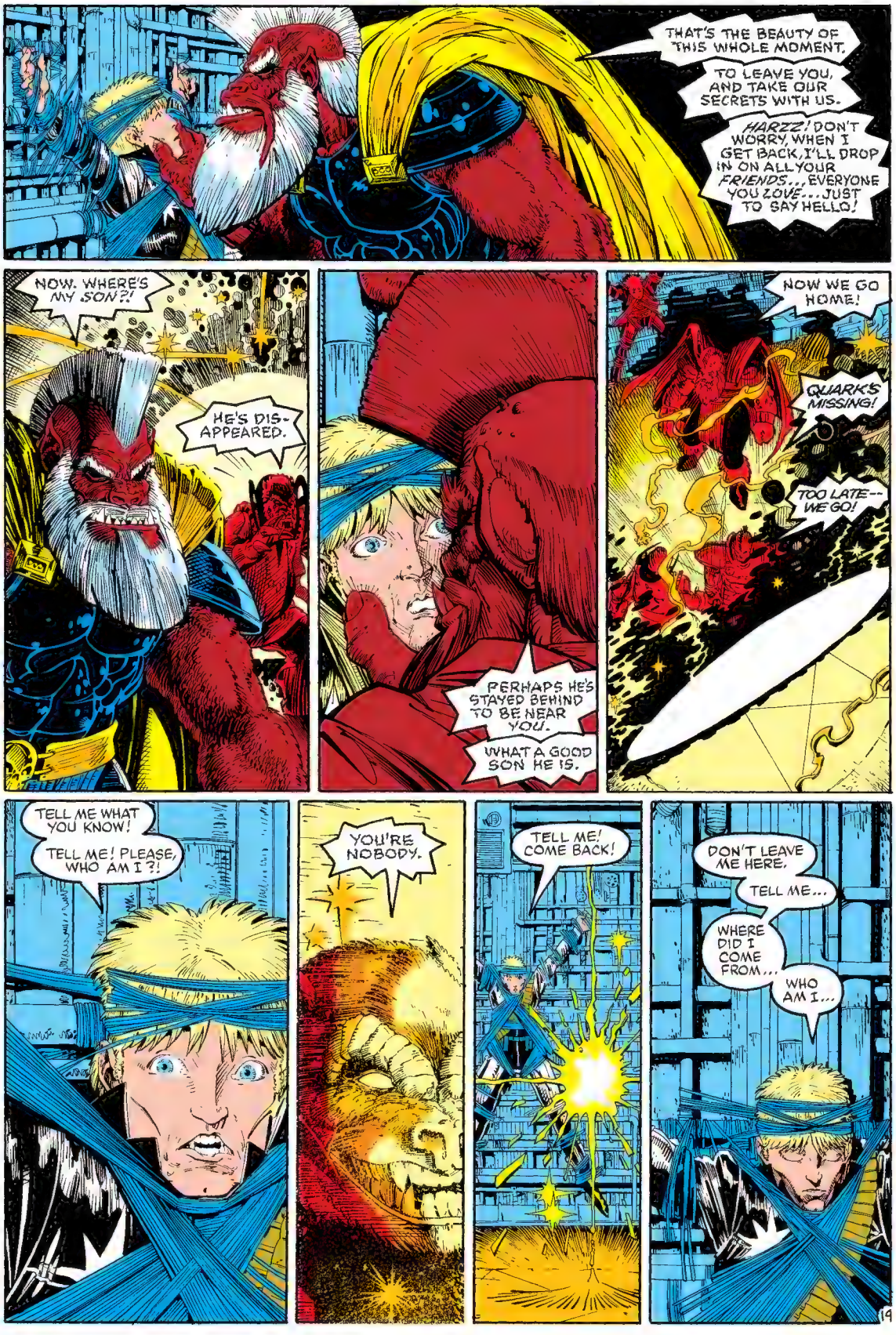

SSSSSSKKK
SSSSSSKKKK

I MUST HAVE PUSHED A CRITTER RIGHT INTO THE MACHINERY!
LOOKIT THE FIREWORKS!
THE POWER PLANT'S GOING NUTS! THESE DEMONS HAVE A WEIRD EFFECT ON THESE MACHINES... THERE GO THE LIGHTS!
NOW I'LL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM IN THE DARK!

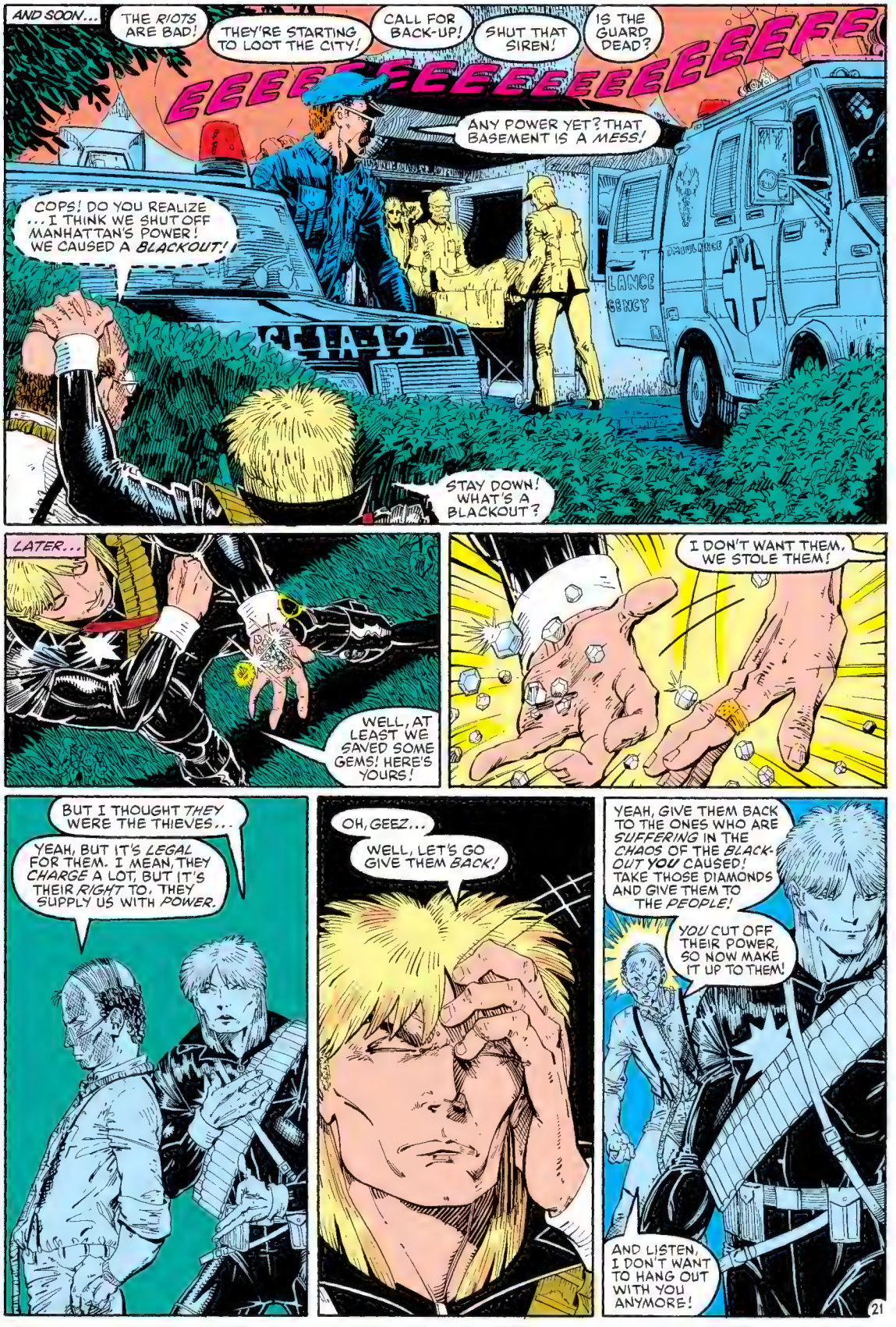
OH, WELL WHO NEEDS LIGHTS?
KPOW!

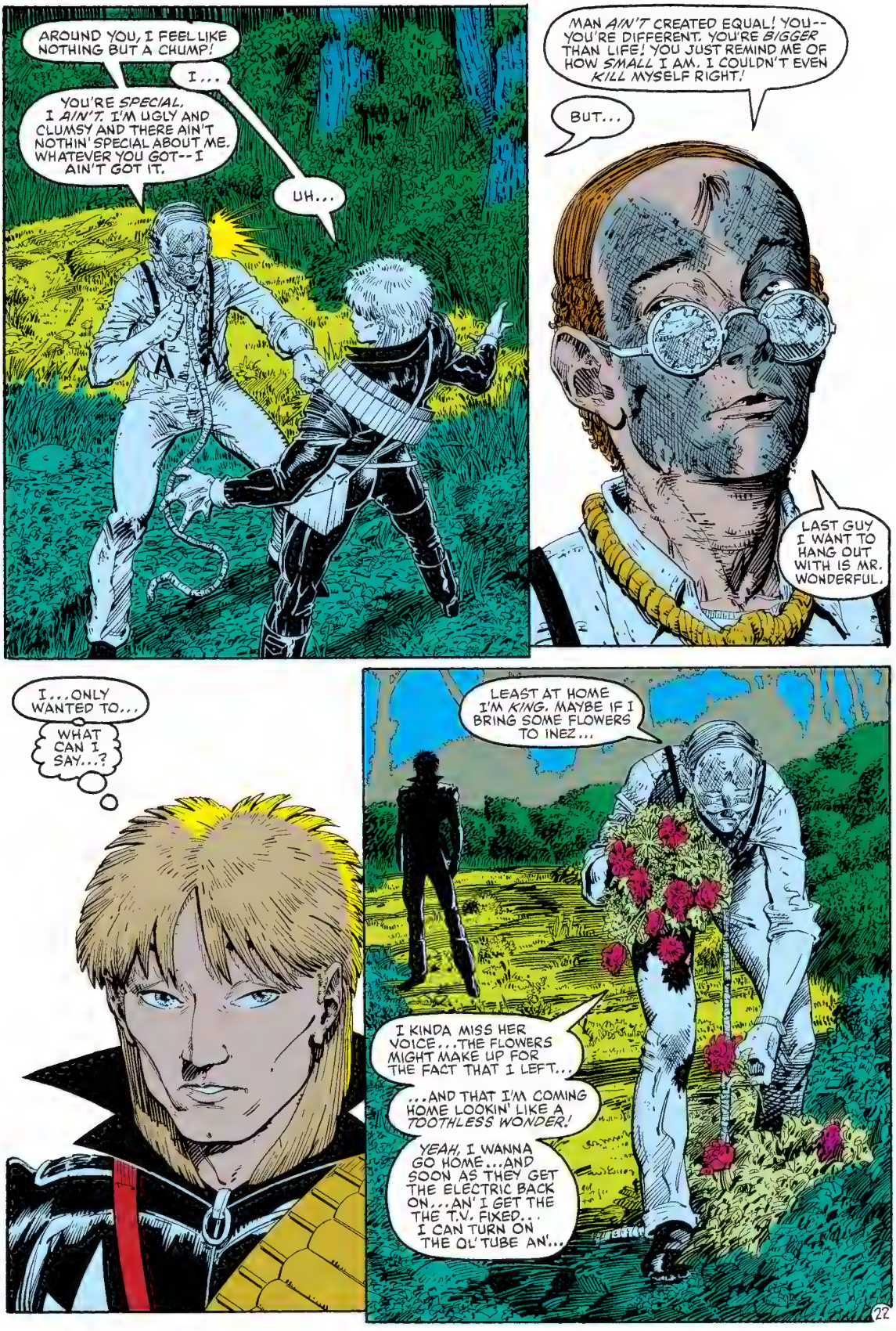

LOOK, LET ME SHOW YOU...
SWITCH CHANNELS! I WANT TO WATCH...
LET'S SEE THOSE LOVELY FLOWERS...
WHEN I FINISH PAINTING THIS...
...THE LIGHTS...
OH, NO!
HARRY, WATCH OUT!
...WHAT'S FLICKERING...
EEEEEEEEEE
I'M BLIND!
STOP IT!
OUCH!
CRBASH!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
NO! DON'T!
CITY-WIDE BLACKOUT!
MANHATTAN'S IN THE DARK! IT'LL BE CHAOS! CRIME-RATE'S GONNA SKYROCKET!
GO AHEAD, JAMESON, SAY IT.
MUST BE SPIDER-MAN'S FAULT!
SSSSSHK
SSSSSHK
SSK
SSSKKH
COME ON, LONGSHOT, GET LUCKY!
ZZZ
KRRRK
ZKZZK
JRK

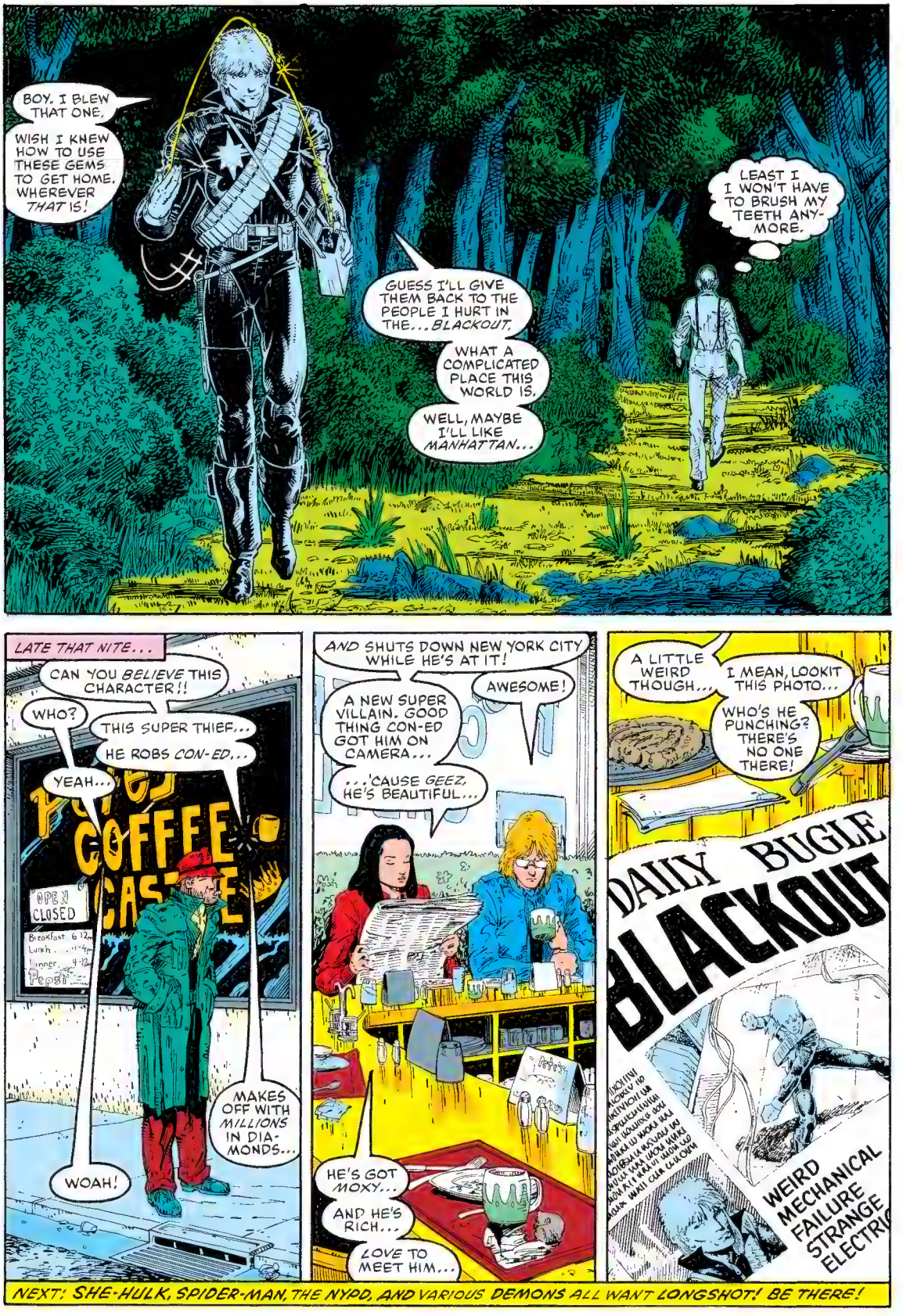

YEAH! THEY TELL ME I'M LUCKY...
AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE RIGHT!
KONK!
AND A FEW DARK MOMENTS LATER...
OOOOH...BLAST, I CAN'T MOVE!
HEH! THE DIAMONDS ARE PERFECT!
ZZRRZZ THE HARMONICS ARE RIGHT! THE SOUND REFRACTS! THE COLOR IS TUNED!
SPIRAL DOES THE REST! HARZZZZS
TIMESPACE WILL OPEN--WE'RE GOING HOME!
AND THE SWEETEST PART--WE LEAVE HIM BEHIND!
YOU GUYS KNOW WHO I AM!?
TELL ME!
HE KNOWS NOT WHO HE IS, EH? HARRHARRZ
TIME TO SLIP AWAY...
REMEMBERS NOTHING? HARRZK!


THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF THIS WHOLE MOMENT.
TO LEAVE YOU, AND TAKE OUR SECRETS WITH US.
HARZZ! DON'T WORRY, WHEN I GET BACK, I'LL DROP IN ON ALL YOUR FRIENDS... EVERYONE YOU LOVE... JUST TO SAY HELLO!
NOW. WHERE'S MY SON?!
HE'S DIS-APPEARED.
PERHAPS HE'S STAYED BEHIND TO BE NEAR YOU.
WHAT A GOOD SON HE IS.
NOW WE GO HOME!
QUARK'S MISSING!
TOO LATE-- WE GO!
TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW!
TELL ME! PLEASE, WHO AM I?!
YOU'RE NOBODY.
TELL ME! COME BACK!
DON'T LEAVE ME HERE.
TELL ME...
WHERE DID I COME FROM...
WHO AM I...

WHO... AM... I...
PUP! YOU'VE COME BACK!
YES...
THANK YOU FOR SAVING JINX, AND NOW ME!
UH... EASY, LONGSHOT, HE'S A BIT QUICK-TEMPERED...
SAVE HIM?! I DIDN'T SAVE HIM! I TOOK HIM TO KILL HIM! 'CAUSE I HATE YOU!
YOU AND YOUR HUMAN FORM! AND YOUR PRETTY FACE! AND YOUR STINKING LUCK!
BUT YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM!
PUP! YOU'RE STILL YOU! HOLD ON TO WHAT'S GOOD IN YOU!
I STILL SEE THE PUP I LOVE IN THERE SOMEWHERE!
HE ISN'T WORTH SUCH A GRAND DEATH!
HARUMPH! WEIRD FELLOW... SORT OF... A DOG WHO WISHES HE WAS A PERSON.
IS THAT WHY HE HATES YOU?
OH-OH. LOTS OF CHAOS OUT THERE, GUARDS... AND...


AND SOON...
THE RIOTS ARE BAD!
THEY'RE STARTING TO LOOT THE CITY!
CALL FOR BACK-UP!
SHUT THAT SIREN!
IS THE GUARD DEAD?
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
ANY POWER YET? THAT BASEMENT IS A MESS!
COPS! DO YOU REALIZE ... I THINK WE SHUT OFF MANHATTAN'S POWER! WE CAUSED A BLACKOUT!!
STAY DOWN! WHAT'S A BLACKOUT?
LATER...
WELL, AT LEAST WE SAVED SOME GEMS! HERE'S YOURS!
I DON'T WANT THEM, WE STOLE THEM!
BUT I THOUGHT THEY WERE THE THIEVES...
YEAH, BUT IT'S LEGAL FOR THEM. I MEAN, THEY CHARGE A LOT, BUT IT'S THEIR RIGHT TO. THEY SUPPLY US WITH POWER.
OH, GEEZ...
WELL, LET'S GO GIVE THEM BACK!
YEAH, GIVE THEM BACK TO THE ONES WHO ARE SUFFERING IN THE CHAOS OF THE BLACK-OUT YOU CAUSED! TAKE THOSE DIAMONDS AND GIVE THEM TO THE PEOPLE!
YOU CUT OFF THEIR POWER, SO NOW MAKE IT UP TO THEM!
AND LISTEN, I DON'T WANT TO HANG OUT WITH YOU ANYMORE!
21


AROUND YOU, I FEEL LIKE NOTHING BUT A CHUMP!
I...
YOU'RE SPECIAL, I AIN'T. I'M UGLY AND CLUMSY AND THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' SPECIAL ABOUT ME. WHATEVER YOU GOT--I AIN'T GOT IT.
UH...
MAN AIN'T CREATED EQUAL! YOU--YOU'RE DIFFERENT. YOU'RE BIGGER THAN LIFE! YOU JUST REMIND ME OF HOW SMALL I AM. I COULDN'T EVEN KILL MYSELF RIGHT!
BUT...
LAST GUY I WANT TO HANG OUT WITH IS MR. WONDERFUL.
I...ONLY WANTED TO...
WHAT CAN I SAY...?
LEAST AT HOME I'M KING. MAYBE IF I BRING SOME FLOWERS TO INEZ...
I KINDA MISS HER VOICE...THE FLOWERS MIGHT MAKE UP FOR THE FACT THAT I LEFT...
...AND THAT I'M COMING HOME LOOKIN' LIKE A TOOTHLESS WONDER!
YEAH, I WANNA GO HOME...AND SOON AS THEY GET THE ELECTRIC BACK ON...AN' I GET THE THE T.V. FIXED... I CAN TURN ON THE OL' TUBE AN'...


BOY. I BLEW THAT ONE.
WISH I KNEW HOW TO USE THESE GEMS TO GET HOME. WHEREVER THAT IS!
GUESS I'LL GIVE THEM BACK TO THE PEOPLE I HURT IN THE... BLACKOUT.
WHAT A COMPLICATED PLACE THIS WORLD IS.
WELL, MAYBE I'LL LIKE MANHATTAN...
LEAST I I WON'T HAVE TO BRUSH MY TEETH ANY-MORE.
LATE THAT NITE...
CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS CHARACTER!!
WHO?
THIS SUPER THIEF...
HE ROBS CON-ED...
YEAH...
COFFEE
OPEN
CLOSED
Breakfast 6-12
Lunch
Dinner 5-12
Pepsi
MAKES OFF WITH MILLIONS IN DIA-MONDS...
WOAH!
AND SHUTS DOWN NEW YORK CITY WHILE HE'S AT IT!
AWESOME!
A NEW SUPER VILLAIN. GOOD THING CON-ED GOT HIM ON CAMERA...
...'CAUSE GEEZ, HE'S BEAUTIFUL...
HE'S GOT MOXY...
AND HE'S RICH...
LOVE TO MEET HIM...
A LITTLE WEIRD THOUGH...
I MEAN, LOOKIT THIS PHOTO...
WHO'S HE PUNCHING? THERE'S NO ONE THERE!
DAILY BUGLE
BLACKOUT
WEIRD MECHANICAL FAILURE STRANGE ELECTRI
NEXT: SHE-HULK, SPIDER-MAN, THE NYPD, AND VARIOUS DEMONS ALL WANT LONGSHOT! BE THERE!

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4
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ARTHUR ADAMS
7-25-84

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

CAN'T GIVE IT ALL AWAY!

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ARTHUR ADAMS PENCILS
WHILCE PORTOCIO INKS
JOE ROSEN LETTERS
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORS
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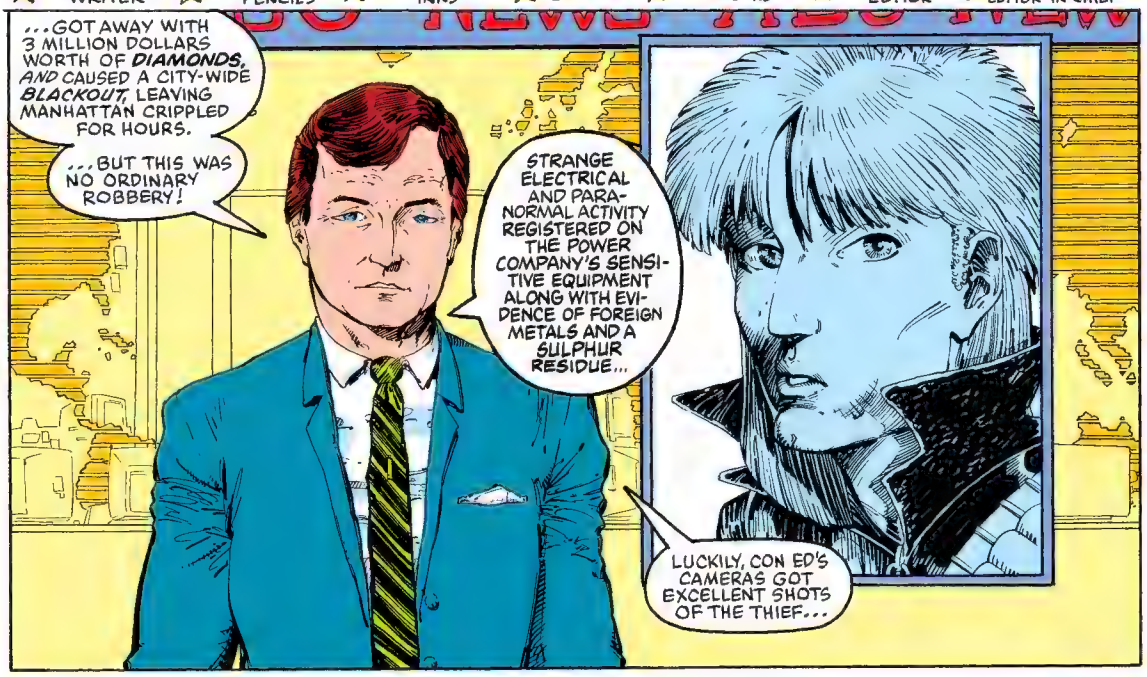
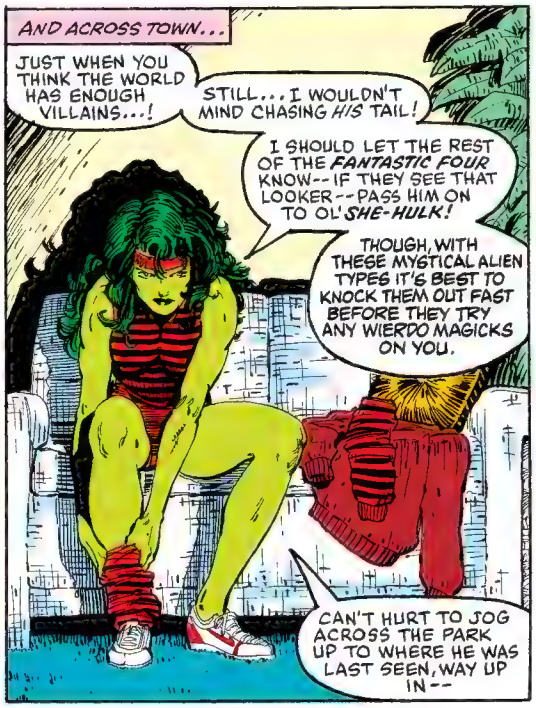
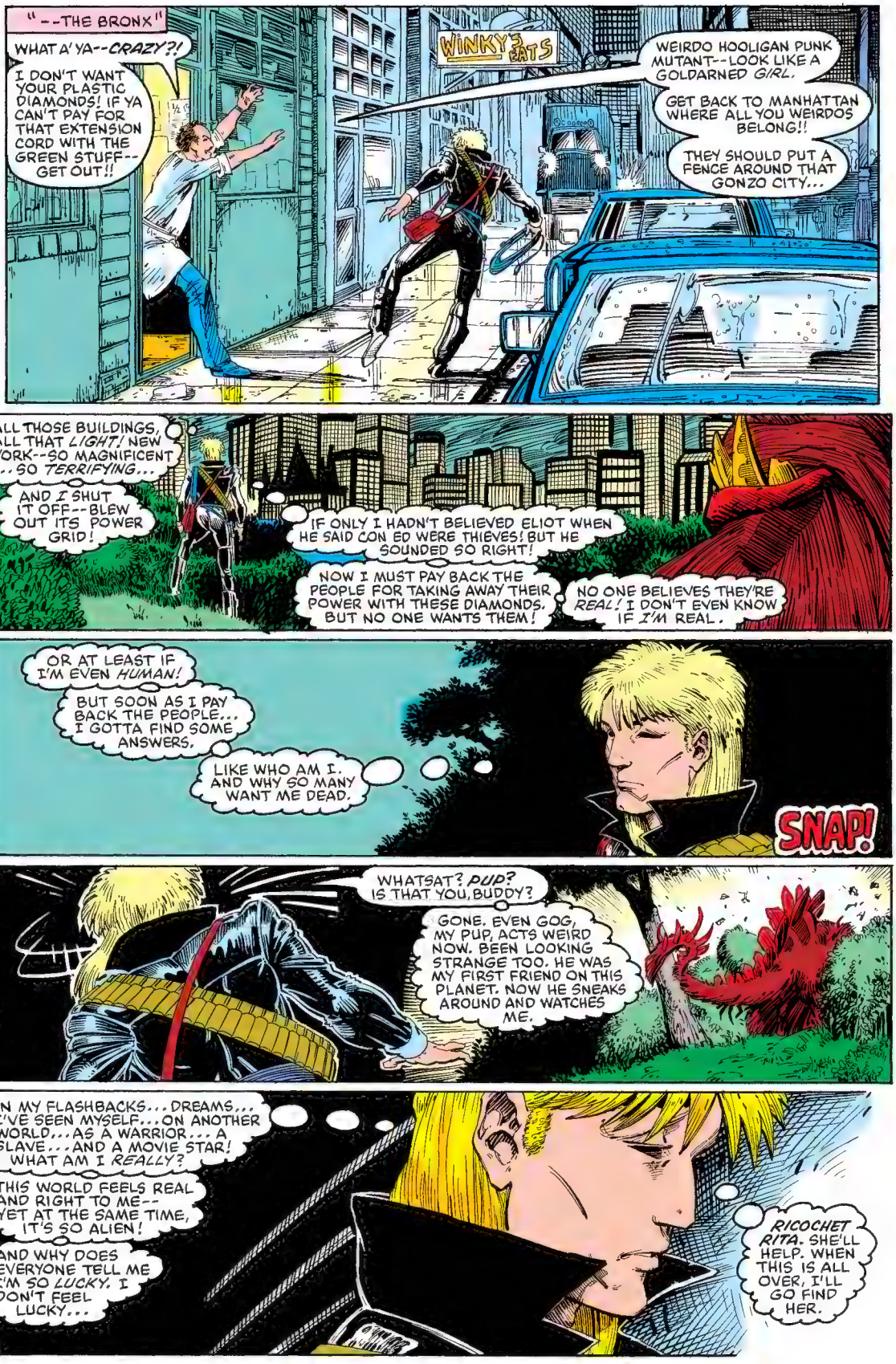
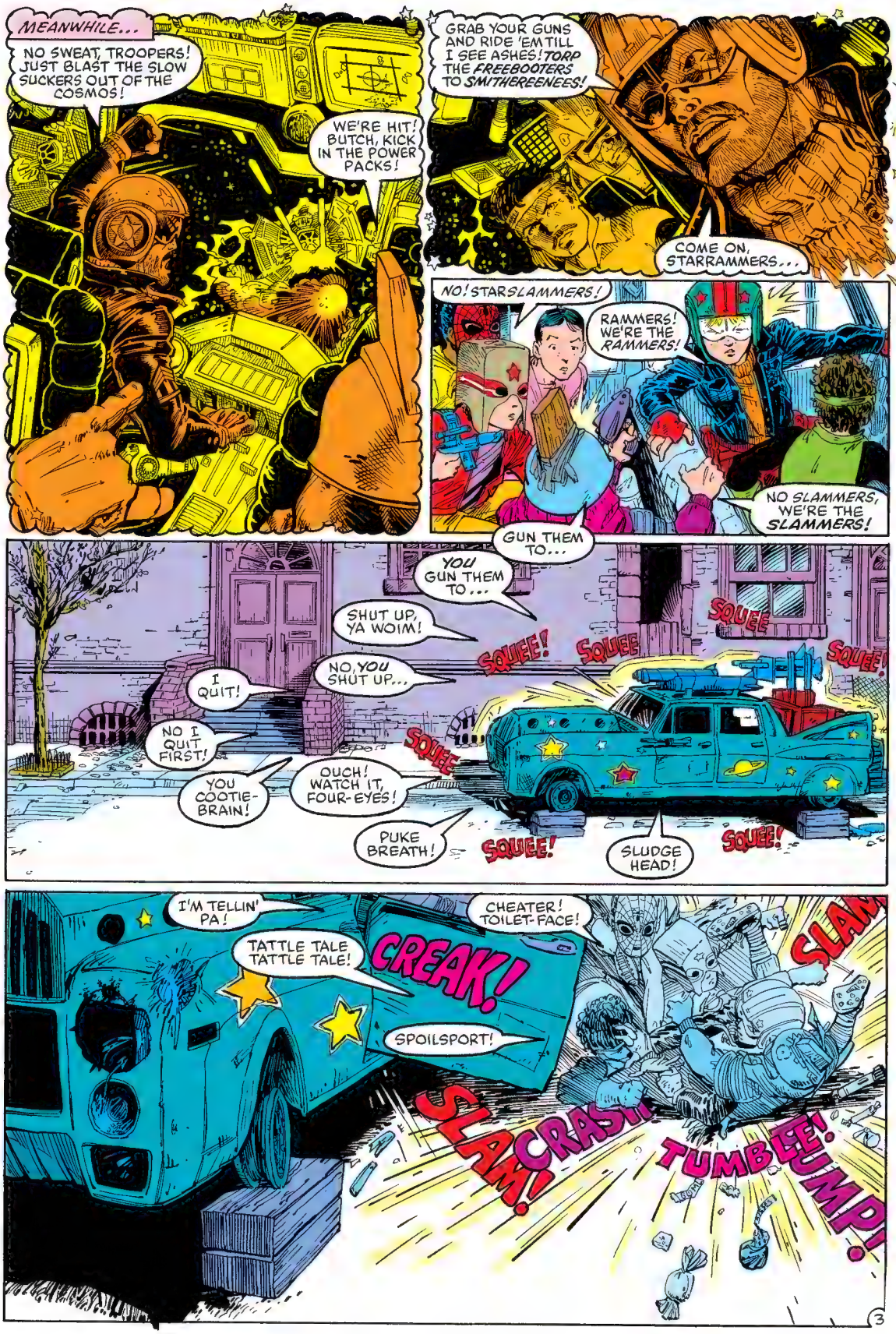
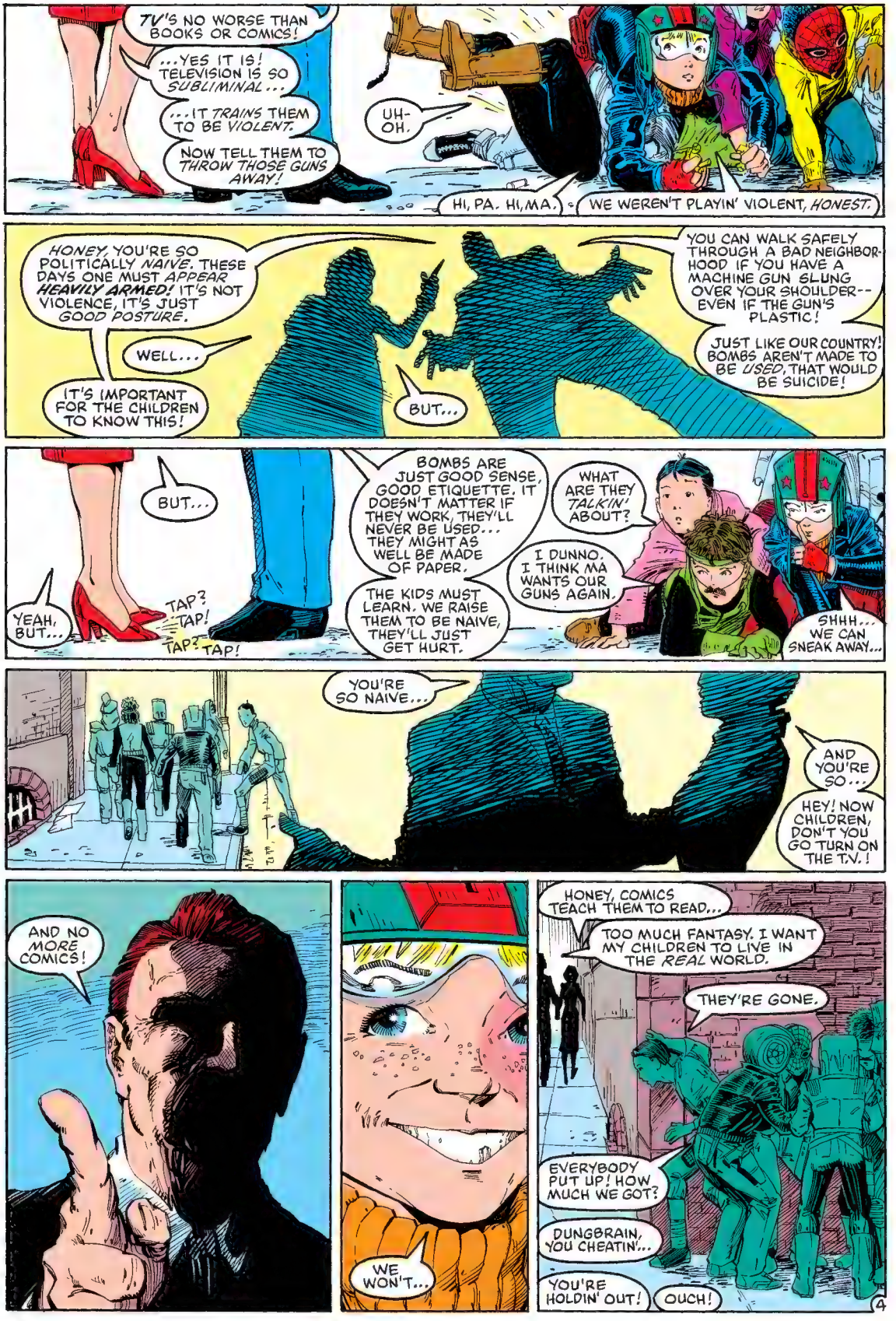

...GOT AWAY WITH 3 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF DIAMONDS, AND CAUSED A CITY-WIDE BLACKOUT, LEAVING MANHATTAN CRIPPLED FOR HOURS.
...BUT THIS WAS NO ORDINARY ROBBERY!
STRANGE ELECTRICAL AND PARA-NORMAL ACTIVITY REGISTERED ON THE POWER COMPANY'S SENSI-TIVE EQUIPMENT ALONG WITH EVI-DENCE OF FOREIGN METALS AND A SULPHUR RESIDUE...
LUCKILY, CON ED'S CAMERAS GOT EXCELLENT SHOTS OF THE THIEF...

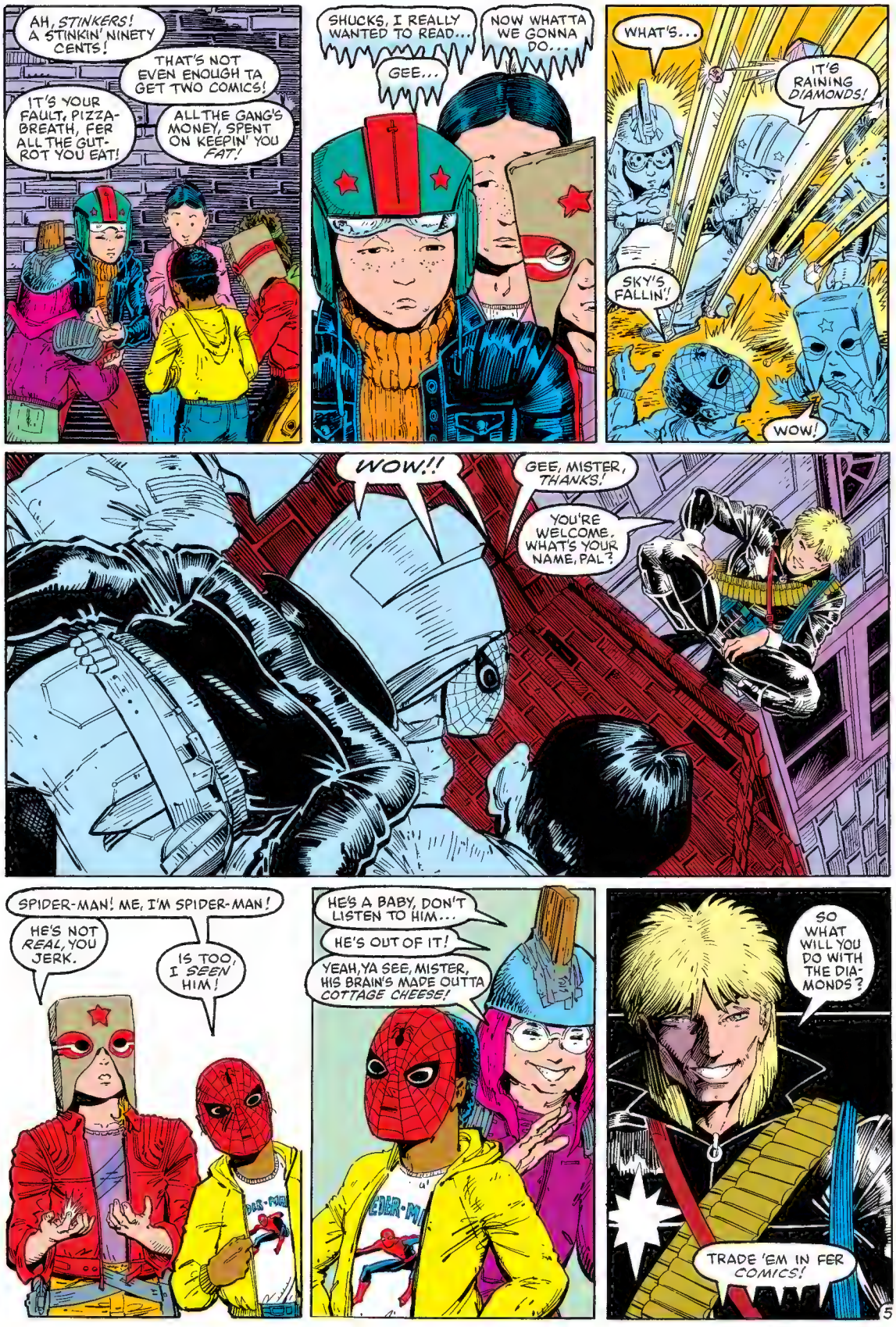
COULD THIS BE ANOTHER IN THE RISING NUMBERS OF MUTANTS THAT MENACE...
AND WHERE WAS I DURING THOSE DARK ROMANTIC BLACKOUT HOURS?!
WITH MY PUBLISHER JAMESON AT THE DAILY BUGLE! SHEESH, WHAT A WASTE!
LOOKIT THAT PUNK--HE'S JUST A KID!
BURMA SHA
I WANTED TO STAY PETER PARKER TODAY, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SPIDER-MAN'S GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE A SWING UP ABOVE MANHATTAN...
BET THE BUGLE WOULD PAY BIG BUCKS FOR SOME GOOD ACTION PHOTOS OF THIS BOZO.

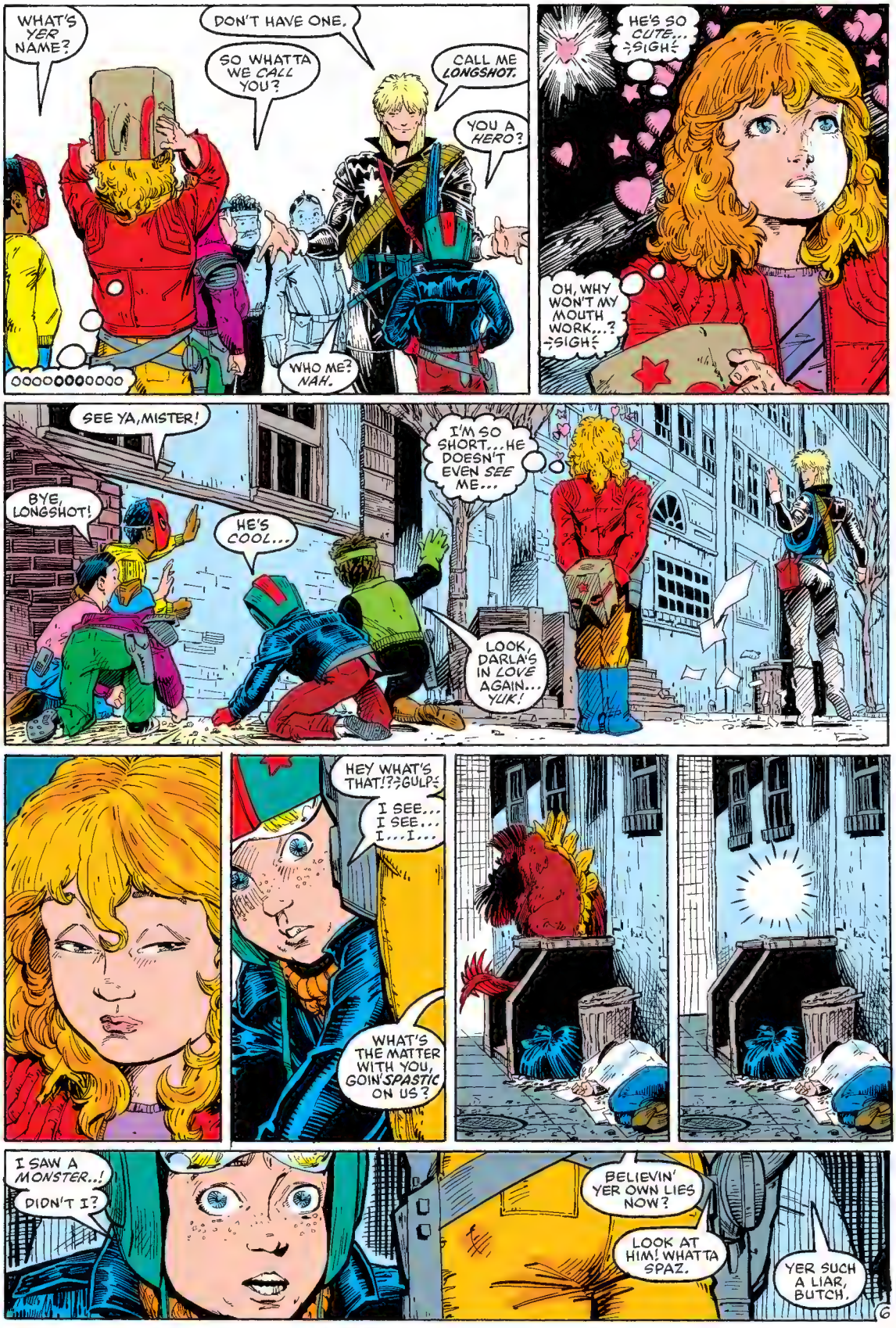

AND ACROSS TOWN...
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THE WORLD HAS ENOUGH VILLAINS...!
STILL... I WOULDN'T MIND CHASING HIS TAIL!
I SHOULD LET THE REST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR KNOW--IF THEY SEE THAT LOOKER--PASS HIM ON TO OL' SHE-HULK!
THOUGH, WITH THESE MYSTICAL ALIEN TYPES IT'S BEST TO KNOCK THEM OUT FAST BEFORE THEY TRY ANY WIERDO MAGICKS ON YOU.
CAN'T HURT TO JOG ACROSS THE PARK UP TO WHERE HE WAS LAST SEEN, WAY UP IN--


"--THE BRONX"
WHAT A' YA--CRAZY?!
I DON'T WANT YOUR PLASTIC DIAMONDS! IF YA CAN'T PAY FOR THAT EXTENSION CORD WITH THE GREEN STUFF--GET OUT!!
WINKY'S EATS
WEIRDO HOOLIGAN PUNK MUTANT--LOOK LIKE A GOLDARNED GIRL.
GET BACK TO MANHATTAN WHERE ALL YOU WEIRDOS BELONG!!
THEY SHOULD PUT A FENCE AROUND THAT GONZO CITY...
ALL THOSE BUILDINGS, ALL THAT LIGHT! NEW YORK--SO MAGNIFICENT ...SO TERRIFYING...
AND I SHUT IT OFF--BLEW OUT ITS POWER GRID!
IF ONLY I HADN'T BELIEVED ELIOT WHEN HE SAID CON ED WERE THIEVES! BUT HE SOUNDED SO RIGHT!
NOW I MUST PAY BACK THE PEOPLE FOR TAKING AWAY THEIR POWER WITH THESE DIAMONDS. BUT NO ONE WANTS THEM!
NO ONE BELIEVES THEY'RE REAL! I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I'M REAL.
OR AT LEAST IF I'M EVEN HUMAN!
BUT SOON AS I PAY BACK THE PEOPLE... I GOTTA FIND SOME ANSWERS.
LIKE WHO AM I. AND WHY SO MANY WANT ME DEAD.
SNAP!
WHATSAT? PUP? IS THAT YOU, BUDDY?
GONE. EVEN GOG, MY PUP, ACTS WEIRD NOW. BEEN LOOKING STRANGE TOO. HE WAS MY FIRST FRIEND ON THIS PLANET. NOW HE SNEAKS AROUND AND WATCHES ME.
IN MY FLASHBACKS... DREAMS... I'VE SEEN MYSELF... ON ANOTHER WORLD... AS A WARRIOR... A SLAVE... AND A MOVIE STAR! WHAT AM I REALLY?
THIS WORLD FEELS REAL AND RIGHT TO ME--YET AT THE SAME TIME, IT'S SO ALIEN!
AND WHY DOES EVERYONE TELL ME I'M SO LUCKY. I DON'T FEEL LUCKY...
RICOCHET RITA. SHE'LL HELP. WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, I'LL GO FIND HER.

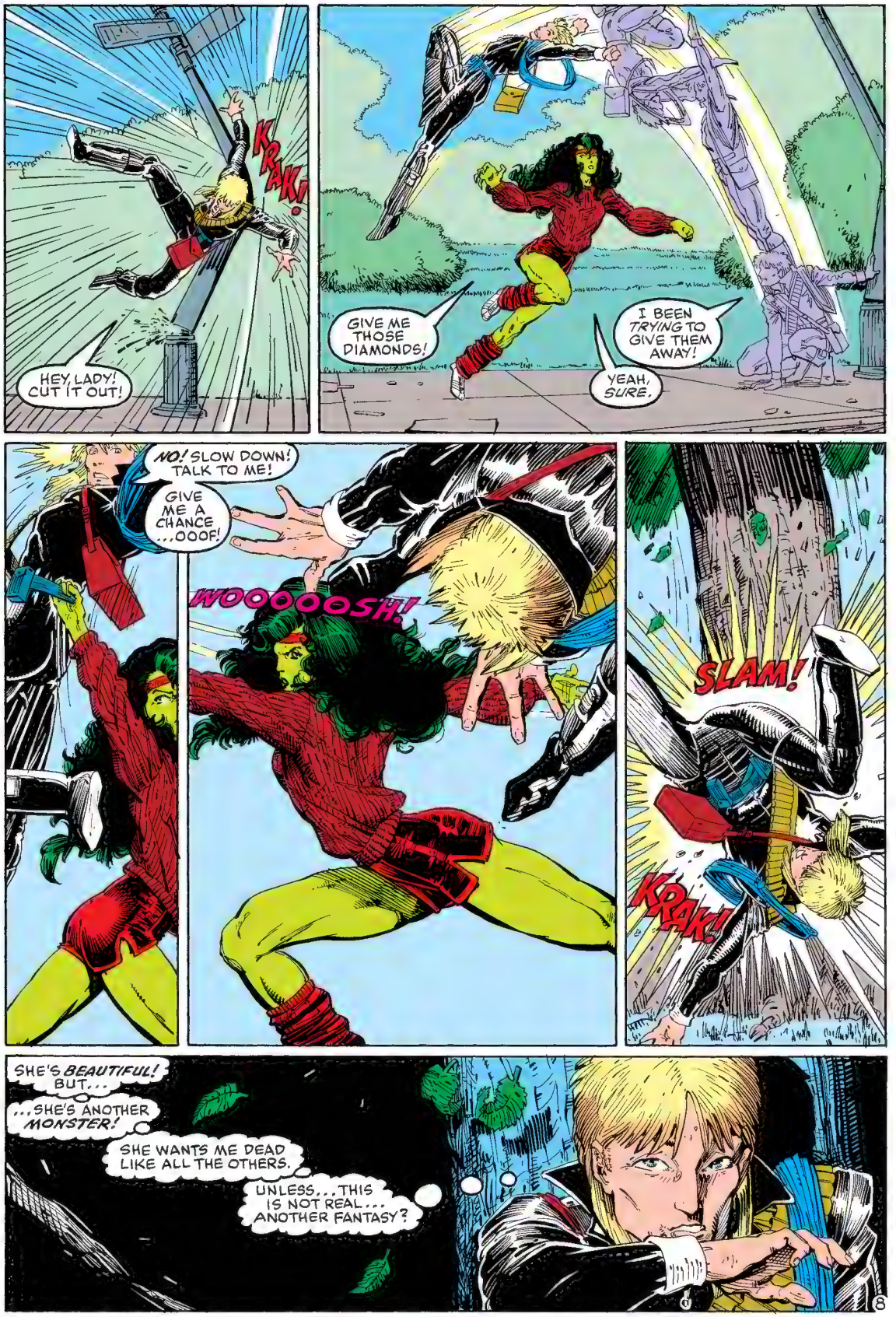

MEANWHILE...
NO SWEAT, TROOPERS! JUST BLAST THE SLOW SUCKERS OUT OF THE COSMOS!
WE'RE HIT! BUTCH, KICK IN THE POWER PACKS!
GRAB YOUR GUNS AND RIDE 'EM TILL I SEE ASHES! TORP THE FREEBOOTERS TO SMITHEREENEES!
COME ON, STARRAMMERS...
NO! STARSLAMMERS!
RAMMERS! WE'RE THE RAMMERS!
NO SLAMMERS, WE'RE THE SLAMMERS!
GUN THEM TO...
YOU GUN THEM TO...
SHUT UP, YA WOIM!
NO, YOU SHUT UP...
I QUIT!
NO I QUIT FIRST!
YOU COOTIE-BRAIN!
OUCH! WATCH IT, FOUR-EYES!
PUKE BREATH!
SLUDGE HEAD!
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
SQUEE!
I'M TELLIN' PA!
TATTLE TALE TATTLE TALE!
CREAK!
SPOILSPORT!
CHEATER! TOILET-FACE!
SLAM!
CRASH!
TUMBLE!
JUMP!

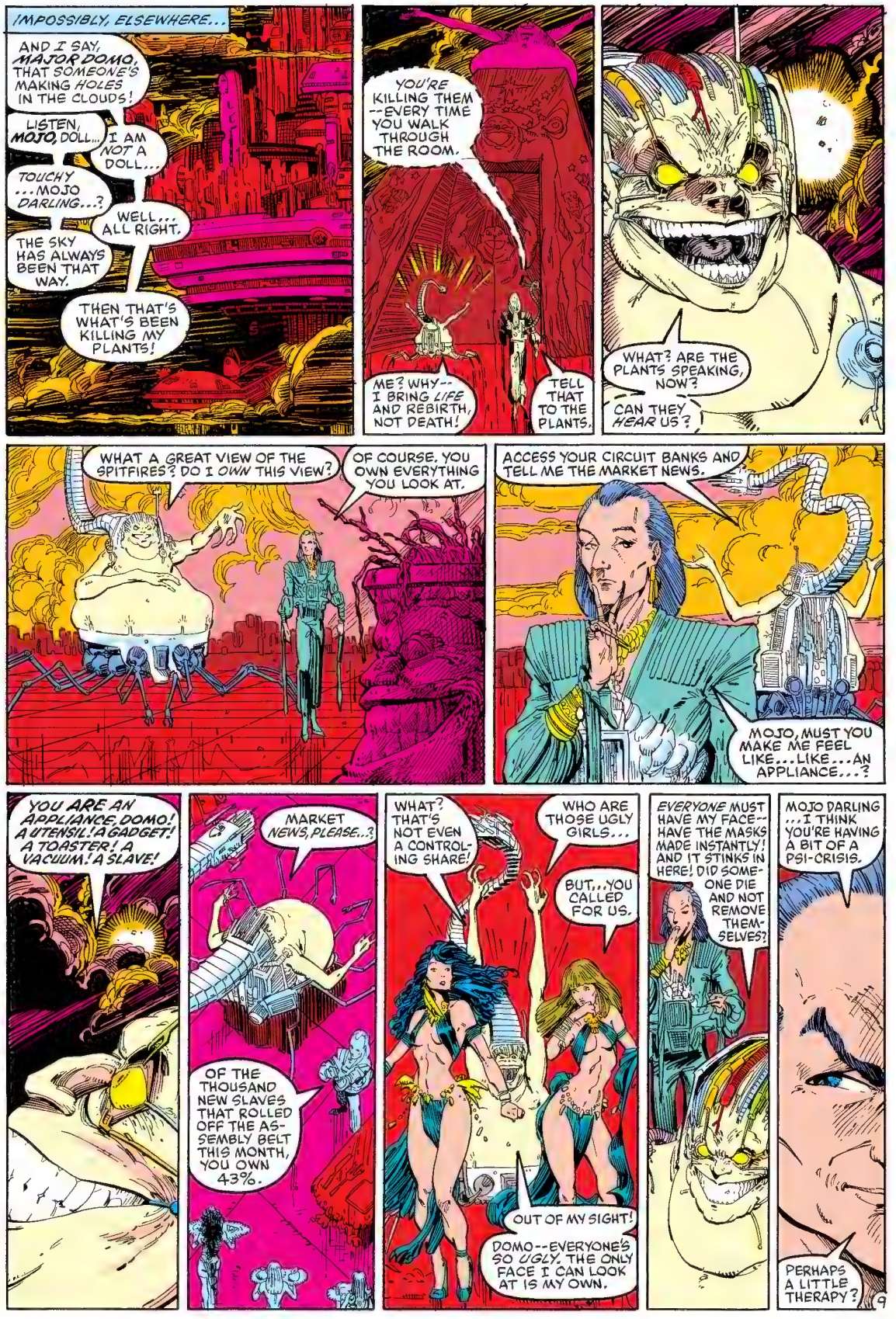

TV'S NO WORSE THAN BOOKS OR COMICS!
...YES IT IS! TELEVISION IS SO SUBLIMINAL...
...IT TRAINS THEM TO BE VIOLENT.
NOW TELL THEM TO THROW THOSE GUNS AWAY!
UH-OH.
HI, PA. HI, MA.
WE WEREN'T PLAYIN' VIOLENT, HONEST.
HONEY, YOU'RE SO POLITICALLY NAIVE. THESE DAYS ONE MUST APPEAR HEAVILY ARMED! IT'S NOT VIOLENCE, IT'S JUST GOOD POSTURE.
WELL...
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE CHILDREN TO KNOW THIS!
BUT...
YOU CAN WALK SAFELY THROUGH A BAD NEIGHBORHOOD IF YOU HAVE A MACHINE GUN SLUNG OVER YOUR SHOULDER--EVEN IF THE GUN'S PLASTIC!
JUST LIKE OUR COUNTRY! BOMBS AREN'T MADE TO BE USED, THAT WOULD BE SUICIDE!
BUT...
YEAH, BUT...
TAP? TAP! TAP? TAP!
BOMBS ARE JUST GOOD SENSE, GOOD ETIQUETTE. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THEY WORK, THEY'LL NEVER BE USED... THEY MIGHT AS WELL BE MADE OF PAPER.
THE KIDS MUST LEARN. WE RAISE THEM TO BE NAIVE, THEY'LL JUST GET HURT.
WHAT ARE THEY TALKIN' ABOUT?
I DUNNO. I THINK MA WANTS OUR GUNS AGAIN.
SHHH... WE CAN SNEAK AWAY...
YOU'RE SO NAIVE...
AND YOU'RE SO...
HEY! NOW CHILDREN, DON'T YOU GO TURN ON THE T.V.!
AND NO MORE COMICS!
WE WON'T...
HONEY, COMICS TEACH THEM TO READ...
TOO MUCH FANTASY. I WANT MY CHILDREN TO LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD.
THEY'RE GONE.
EVERYBODY PUT UP! HOW MUCH WE GOT?
DUNGBRAIN, YOU CHEATIN'...
YOU'RE HOLDIN' OUT!
OUCH!

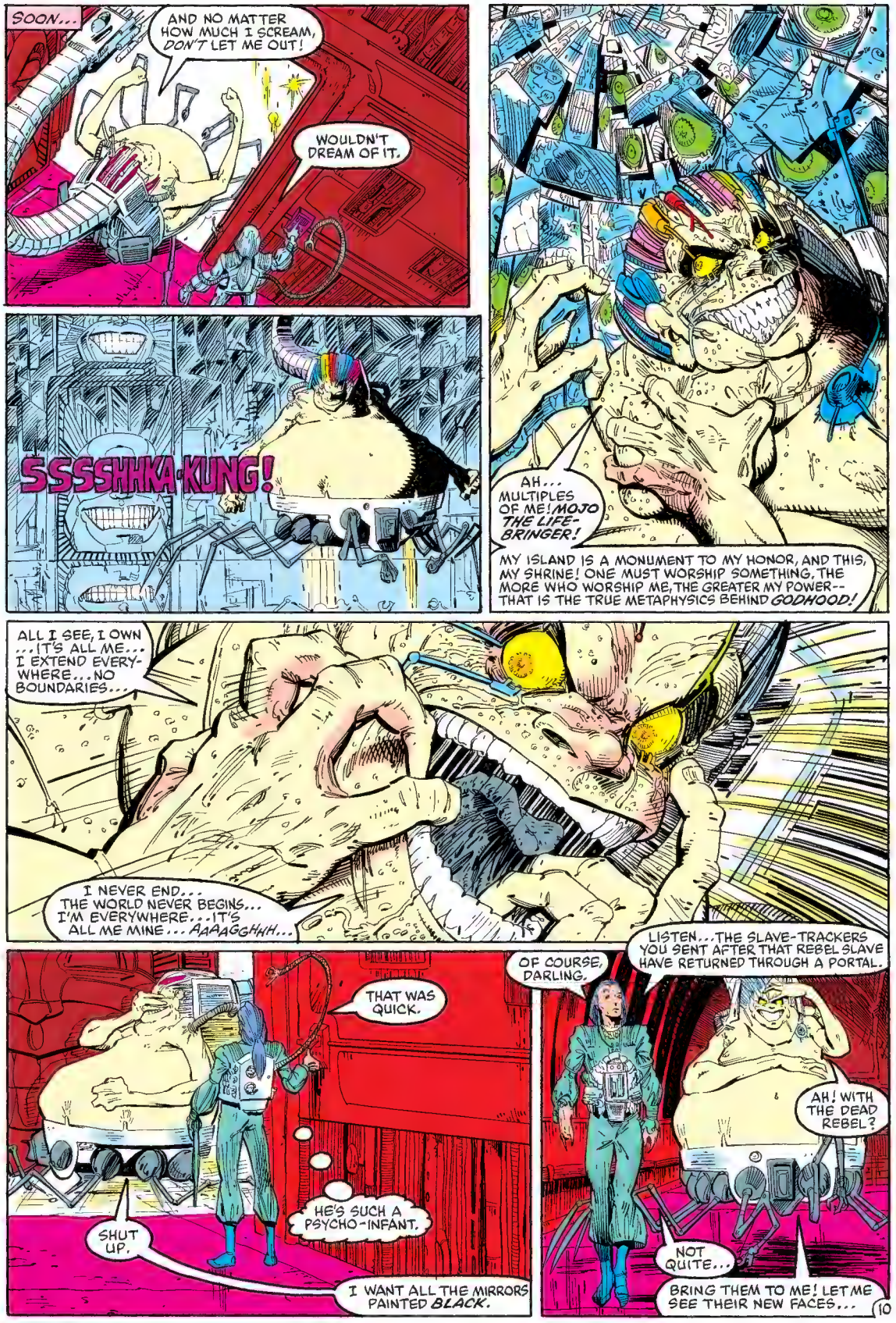

AH, STINKERS! A STINKIN' NINETY CENTS!
THAT'S NOT EVEN ENOUGH TA GET TWO COMICS!
IT'S YOUR FAULT, PIZZA-BREATH, FER ALL THE GUT-ROT YOU EAT!
ALL THE GANG'S MONEY, SPENT ON KEEPIN' YOU FAT!
SHUCKS, I REALLY WANTED TO READ...
NOW WHATTA WE GONNA DO...
GEE...
WHAT'S...
IT'S RAINING DIAMONDS!
SKY'S FALLIN'!
WOW!
WOW!!
GEE, MISTER, THANKS!
YOU'RE WELCOME. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, PAL?
SPIDER-MAN! ME, I'M SPIDER-MAN!
HE'S NOT REAL, YOU JERK.
IS TOO, I SEEN HIM!
HE'S A BABY, DON'T LISTEN TO HIM...
HE'S OUT OF IT!
YEAH, YA SEE, MISTER, HIS BRAIN'S MADE OUTTA COTTAGE CHEESE!
SO WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE DIA-MONDS?
TRADE 'EM IN FER COMICS!

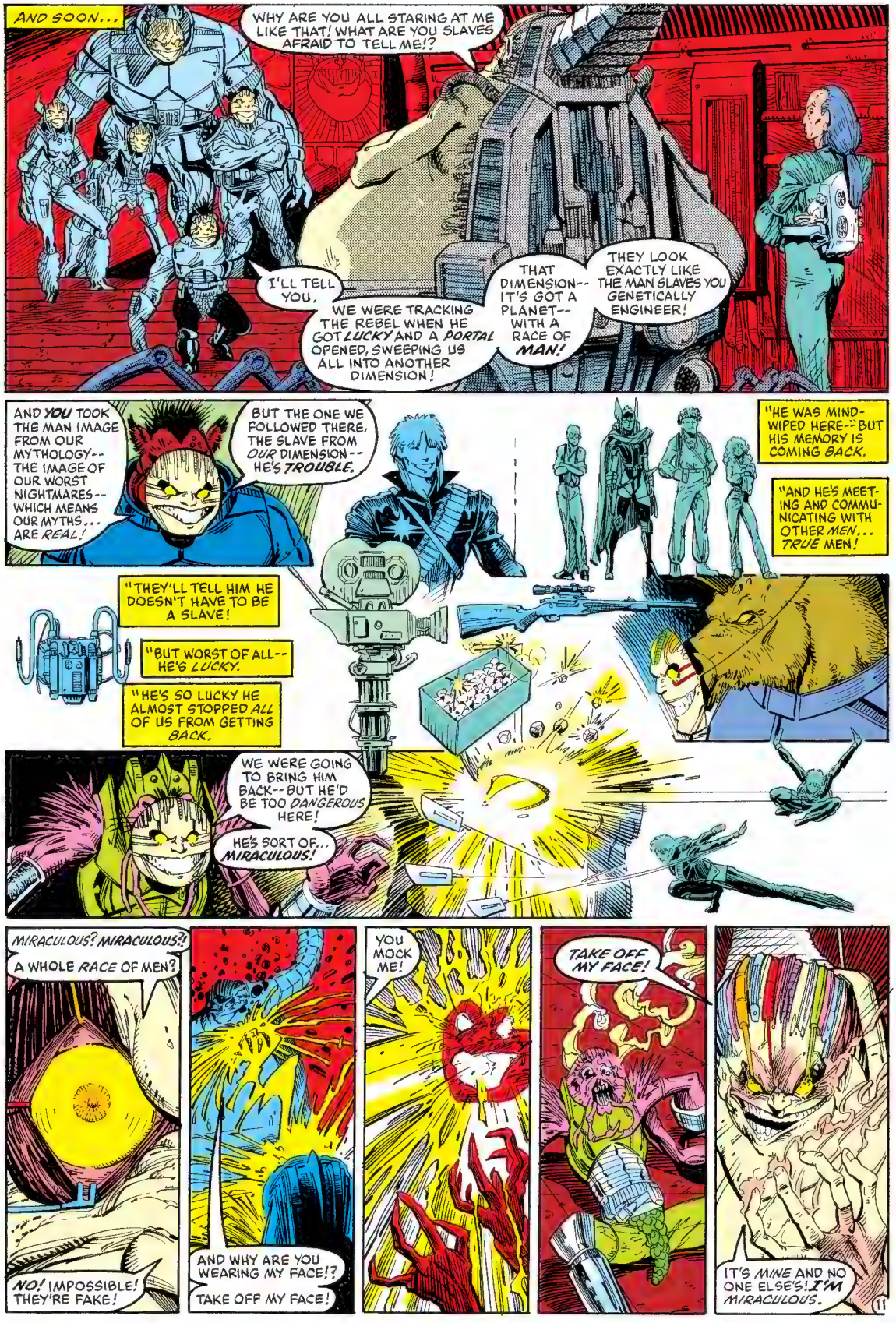

WHAT'S YER NAME?
DON'T HAVE ONE.
SO WHATTA WE CALL YOU?
CALL ME LONGSHOT.
YOU A HERO?
WHO ME? NAH.
OOOOOOOOOOO
HE'S SO CUTE... SIGH
OH, WHY WON'T MY MOUTH WORK...? SIGH
SEE YA, MISTER!
BYE, LONGSHOT!
HE'S COOL...
I'M SO SHORT...HE DOESN'T EVEN SEE ME...
LOOK, DARLA'S IN LOVE AGAIN... YUK!
HEY WHAT'S THAT!? GULP
I SEE... I SEE... I...I...
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, GOIN' SPASTIC ON US?
I SAW A MONSTER..!
DIDN'T I?
BELIEVIN' YER OWN LIES NOW?
LOOK AT HIM! WHATTA SPAZ.
YER SUCH A LIAR, BUTCH.

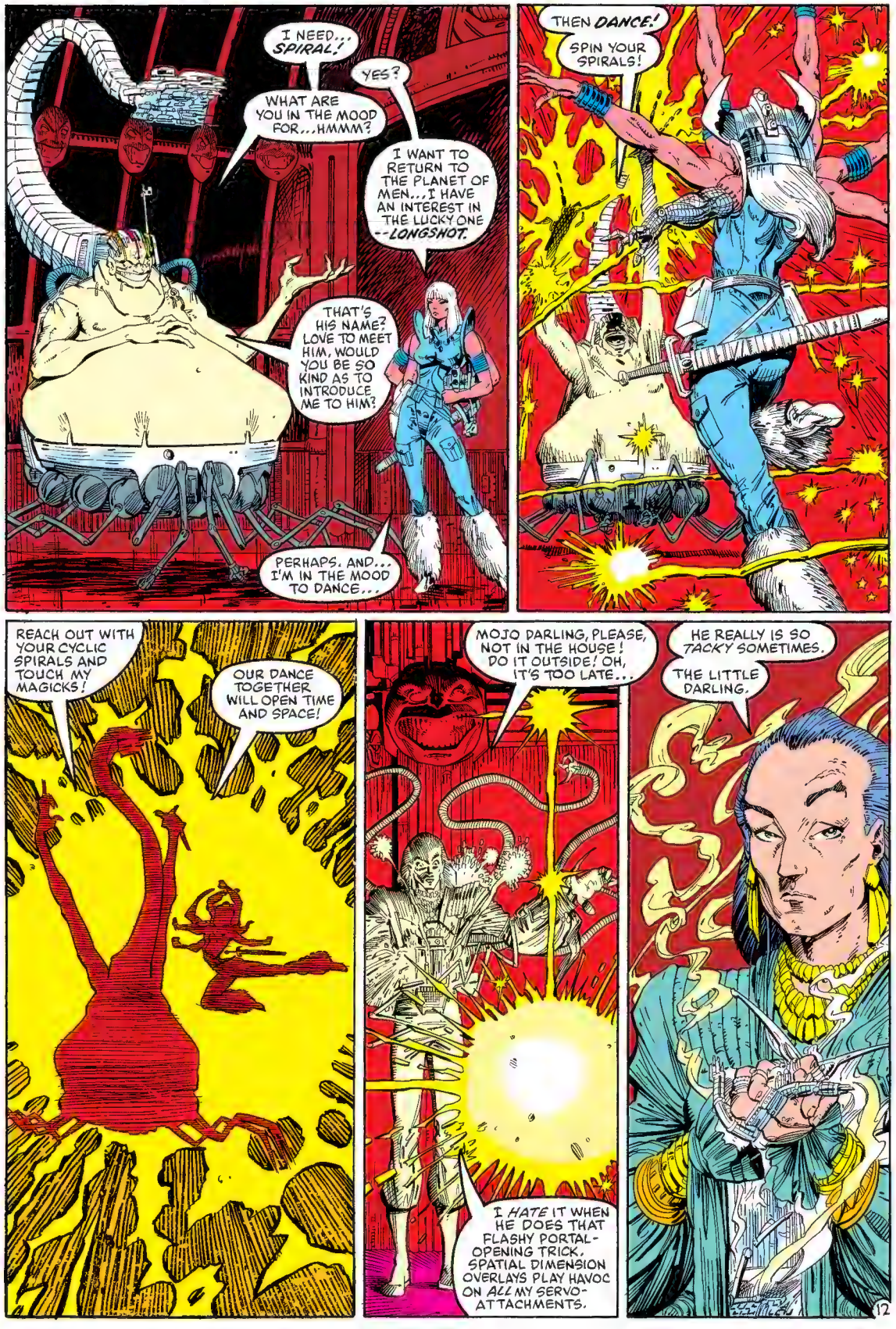
I KEEP TRYIN' TO GIVE AWAY DIAMONDS, BUT PEOPLE JUST TELL ME THEY'RE TOO HOT! GEEZ, THEY FEEL COOL TO ME! THIS PLANET IS SO STRANGE.
I CAN TASTE IT, FEEL IT, SEE IT, READ IT... SO IT'S A REAL WORLD.
CAN'T DENY IT. BUT LOOK AT IT! FANTASY, IT'S GOTTA ALL BE FANTASY.
OR MAYBE THIS WORLD CAN BE BOTH? AT THE SAME TIME?
I CAN'T KEEP WAITING TO WAKE UP AND HAVE IT ALL FEEL RIGHT AGAIN. I'LL KEEP TRYING TO GIVE AWAY DIAMONDS...
...THEN FIND PUP AND THOSE MONSTERS THAT WERE CHASING ME ...THAT IS IF THEY WERE REAL...!
THEY SAID I DRAGGED THEM HERE AND I'VE GOT TO GET THEM BACK BEFORE THEY HURT ANYONE--INCLUDING ME!
WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP THIS PLANET?
I 'READ' SADNESS... VIOLENCE... INSANITY...
COULD I HELP HEAL THESE PEOPLE...?
YEAH?
TAP! TAP!
LOOK AT HIM FLY! I DIDN'T HIT HIM THAT HARD!


KRAK!
HEY, LADY! CUT IT OUT!
GIVE ME THOSE DIAMONDS!
I BEEN *TRYING* TO GIVE THEM AWAY!
YEAH, *SURE.*
NO! SLOW DOWN! TALK TO ME!
GIVE ME A CHANCE ...OOOF!
WOOOOOSH!
SLAM!
KRAK!
SHE'S *BEAUTIFUL!* BUT...
...SHE'S ANOTHER *MONSTER!*
SHE WANTS ME DEAD LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.
UNLESS...THIS IS NOT REAL... ANOTHER FANTASY?

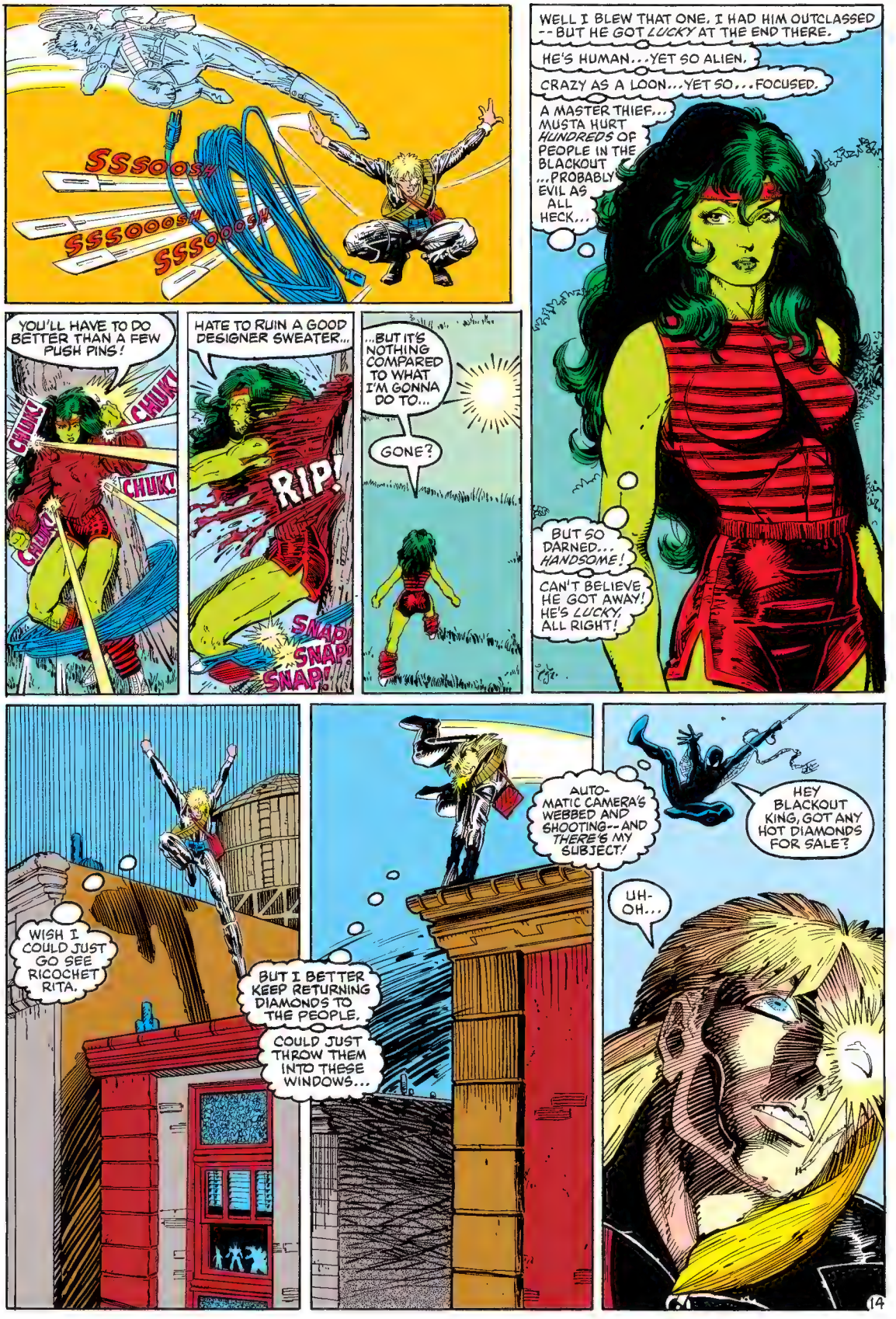

IMPOSSIBLY, ELSEWHERE...
AND I SAY, MAJOR DOMO, THAT SOMEONE'S MAKING HOLES IN THE CLOUDS!
LISTEN, MOJO, DOLL...
I AM NOT A DOLL...
TOUCHY ...MOJO DARLING...?
WELL... ALL RIGHT.
THE SKY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY.
THEN THAT'S WHAT'S BEEN KILLING MY PLANTS!
YOU'RE KILLING THEM --EVERY TIME YOU WALK THROUGH THE ROOM.
ME? WHY-- I BRING LIFE AND REBIRTH, NOT DEATH!
TELL THAT TO THE PLANTS.
WHAT? ARE THE PLANTS SPEAKING, NOW?
CAN THEY HEAR US?
WHAT A GREAT VIEW OF THE SPITFIRES? DO I OWN THIS VIEW?
OF COURSE. YOU OWN EVERYTHING YOU LOOK AT.
ACCESS YOUR CIRCUIT BANKS AND TELL ME THE MARKET NEWS.
MOJO, MUST YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE...LIKE...AN APPLIANCE...?
YOU ARE AN APPLIANCE, DOMO! A UTENSIL! A GADGET! A TOASTER! A VACUUM! A SLAVE!
MARKET NEWS, PLEASE...?
OF THE THOUSAND NEW SLAVES THAT ROLLED OFF THE ASSEMBLY BELT THIS MONTH, YOU OWN 43%.
WHAT? THAT'S NOT EVEN A CONTROLING SHARE!
WHO ARE THOSE UGLY GIRLS...
BUT,,,YOU CALLED FOR US.
OUT OF MY SIGHT!
DOMO--EVERYONE'S SO UGLY. THE ONLY FACE I CAN LOOK AT IS MY OWN.
EVERYONE MUST HAVE MY FACE-- HAVE THE MASKS MADE INSTANTLY! AND IT STINKS IN HERE! DID SOMEONE DIE AND NOT REMOVE THEMSELVES?
MOJO DARLING ...I THINK YOU'RE HAVING A BIT OF A PSI-CRISIS.
PERHAPS A LITTLE THERAPY?

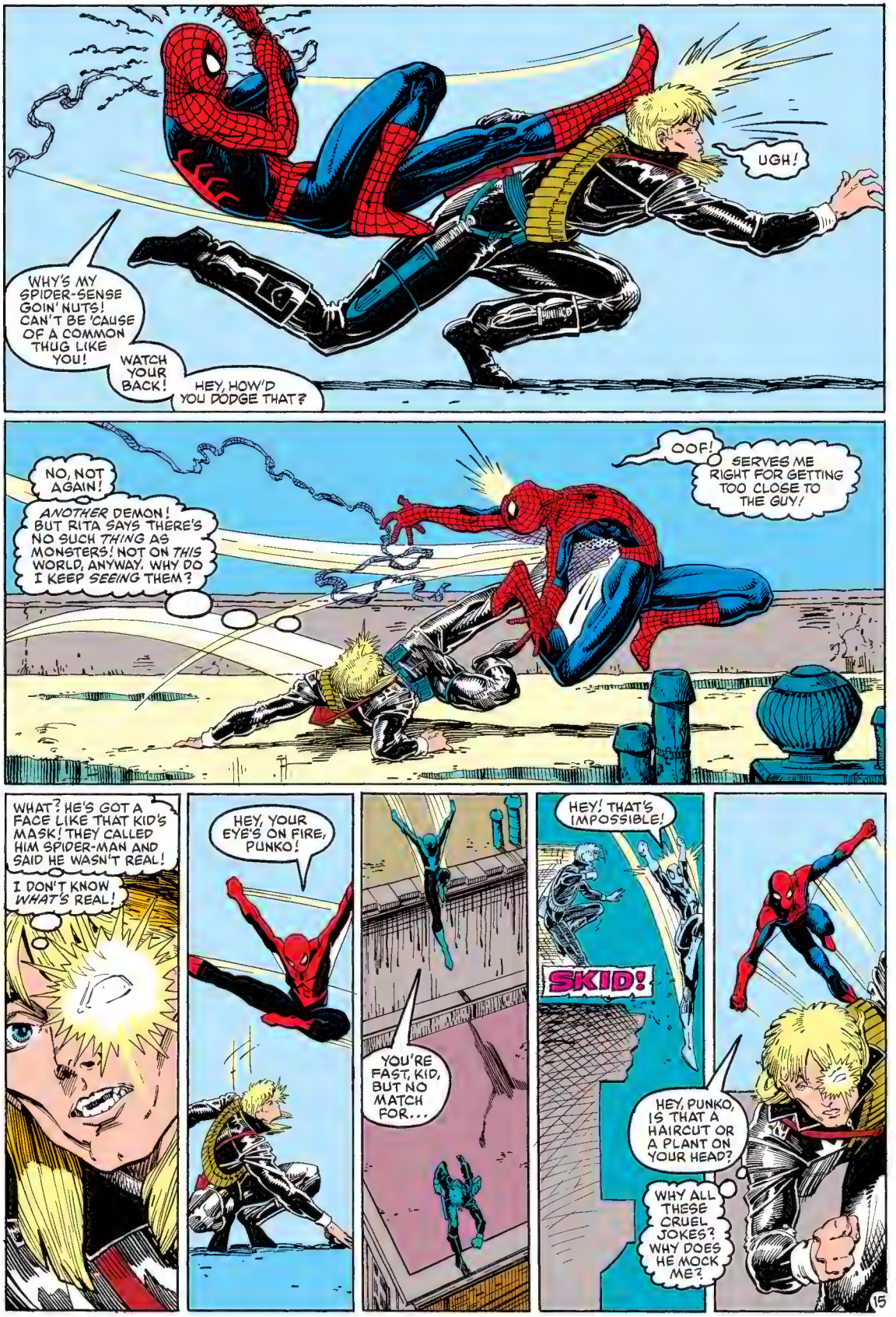

SOON...
AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I SCREAM, DON'T LET ME OUT!
WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT.
SSSSHKA-KUNG!
AH... MULTIPLES OF ME! MOJO THE LIFE-BRINGER!
MY ISLAND IS A MONUMENT TO MY HONOR, AND THIS, MY SHRINE! ONE MUST WORSHIP SOMETHING. THE MORE WHO WORSHIP ME, THE GREATER MY POWER-- THAT IS THE TRUE METAPHYSICS BEHIND GODHOOD!
ALL I SEE, I OWN ...IT'S ALL ME... I EXTEND EVERY-WHERE...NO BOUNDARIES...
I NEVER END... THE WORLD NEVER BEGINS... I'M EVERYWHERE...IT'S ALL ME MINE... AAAAGGHH/H...
THAT WAS QUICK.
SHUT UP.
HE'S SUCH A PSYCHO-INFANT.
I WANT ALL THE MIRRORS PAINTED BLACK.
OF COURSE, DARLING.
LISTEN...THE SLAVE-TRACKERS YOU SENT AFTER THAT REBEL SLAVE HAVE RETURNED THROUGH A PORTAL.
AH! WITH THE DEAD REBEL?
NOT QUITE...
BRING THEM TO ME! LET ME SEE THEIR NEW FACES...

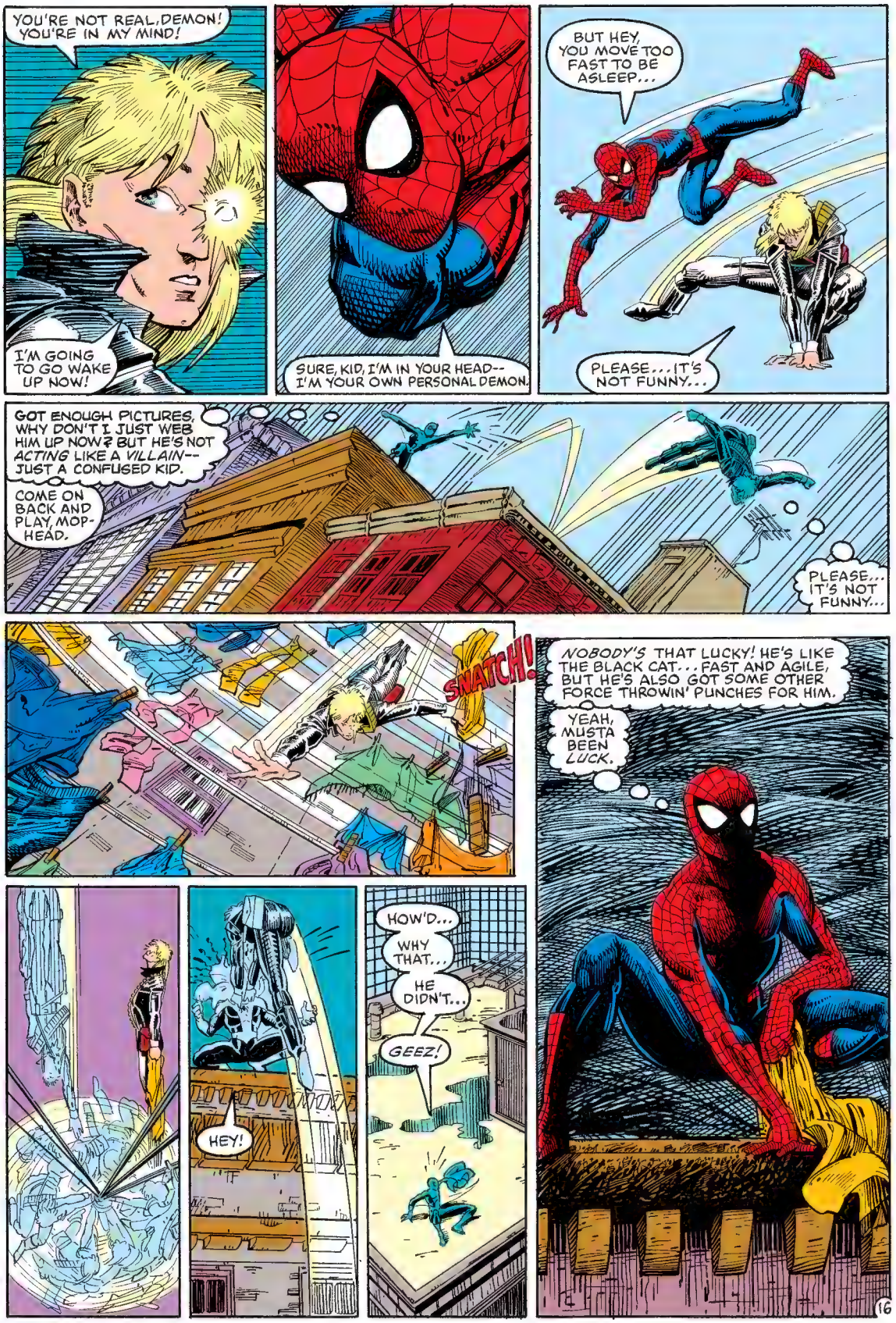

AND SOON...
WHY ARE YOU ALL STARING AT ME LIKE THAT! WHAT ARE YOU SLAVES AFRAID TO TELL ME!?
I'LL TELL YOU,
WE WERE TRACKING THE REBEL WHEN HE GOT LUCKY AND A PORTAL OPENED, SWEEPING US ALL INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION!
THAT DIMENSION-- IT'S GOT A PLANET-- WITH A RACE OF MAN!
THEY LOOK EXACTLY LIKE THE MAN SLAVES YOU GENETICALLY ENGINEER!
AND YOU TOOK THE MAN IMAGE FROM OUR MYTHOLOGY-- THE IMAGE OF OUR WORST NIGHTMARES-- WHICH MEANS OUR MYTHS... ARE REAL!
BUT THE ONE WE FOLLOWED THERE, THE SLAVE FROM OUR DIMENSION-- HE'S TROUBLE.
"HE WAS MIND-WIPED HERE-- BUT HIS MEMORY IS COMING BACK.
"AND HE'S MEETING AND COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER MEN... TRUE MEN!
"THEY'LL TELL HIM HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A SLAVE!
"BUT WORST OF ALL-- HE'S LUCKY.
"HE'S SO LUCKY HE ALMOST STOPPED ALL OF US FROM GETTING BACK.
WE WERE GOING TO BRING HIM BACK-- BUT HE'D BE TOO DANGEROUS HERE!
HE'S SORT OF... MIRACULOUS!
MIRACULOUS? MIRACULOUS?!
A WHOLE RACE OF MEN?
NO! IMPOSSIBLE! THEY'RE FAKE!
AND WHY ARE YOU WEARING MY FACE!?
TAKE OFF MY FACE!
YOU MOCK ME!
TAKE OFF MY FACE!
IT'S MINE AND NO ONE ELSE'S! I'M MIRACULOUS.

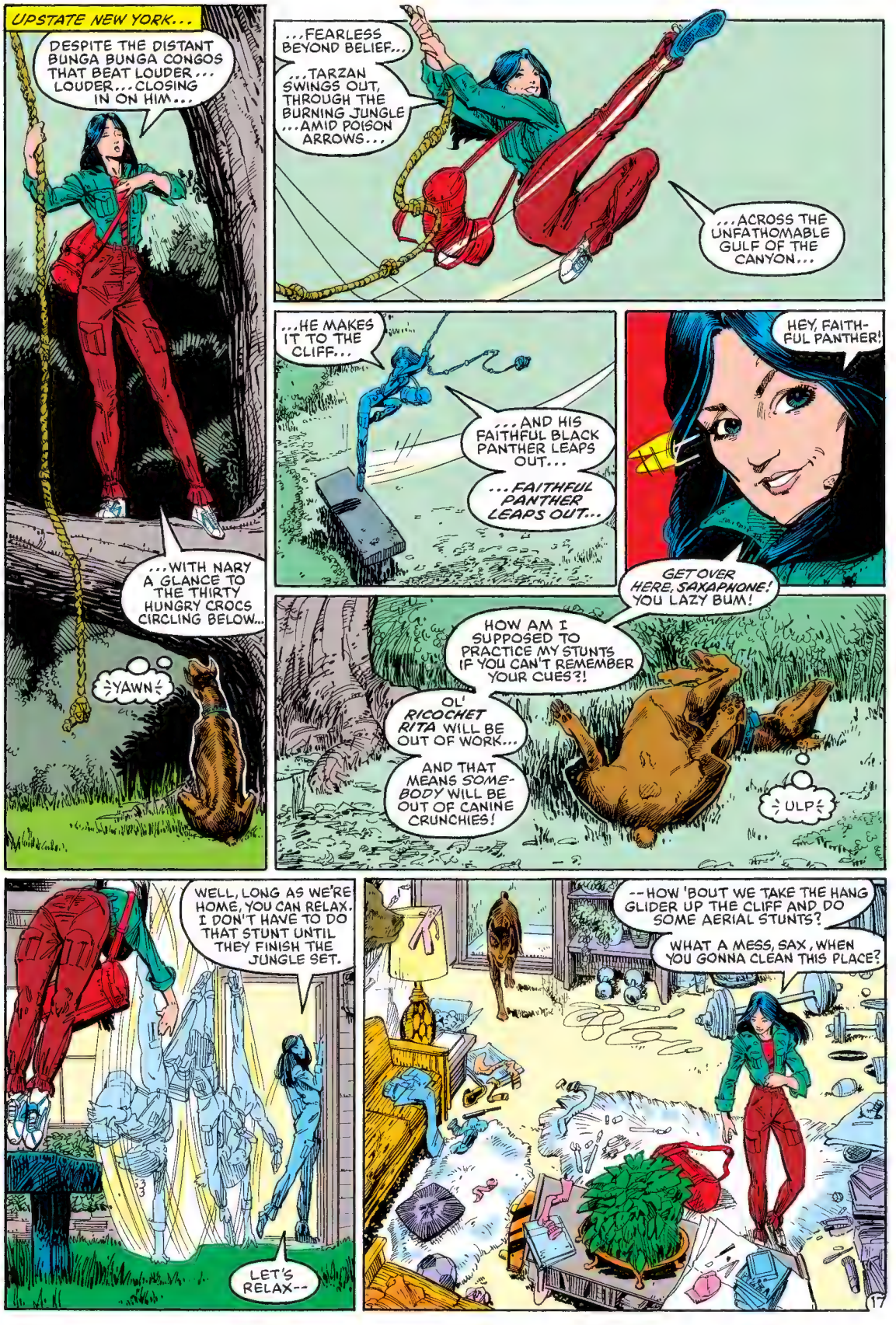

I NEED... SPIRAL!
YES?
WHAT ARE YOU IN THE MOOD FOR...HMMM?
I WANT TO RETURN TO THE PLANET OF MEN...I HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE LUCKY ONE --LONGSHOT.
THAT'S HIS NAME? LOVE TO MEET HIM, WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO INTRODUCE ME TO HIM?
PERHAPS. AND... I'M IN THE MOOD TO DANCE...
THEN DANCE!
SPIN YOUR SPIRALS!
REACH OUT WITH YOUR CYCLIC SPIRALS AND TOUCH MY MAGICKS!
OUR DANCE TOGETHER WILL OPEN TIME AND SPACE!
MOJO DARLING, PLEASE, NOT IN THE HOUSE! DO IT OUTSIDE! OH, IT'S TOO LATE...
I HATE IT WHEN HE DOES THAT FLASHY PORTAL-OPENING TRICK. SPATIAL DIMENSION OVERLAYS PLAY HAVOC ON ALL MY SERVO-ATTACHMENTS.
HE REALLY IS SO TACKY SOMETIMES.
THE LITTLE DARLING.

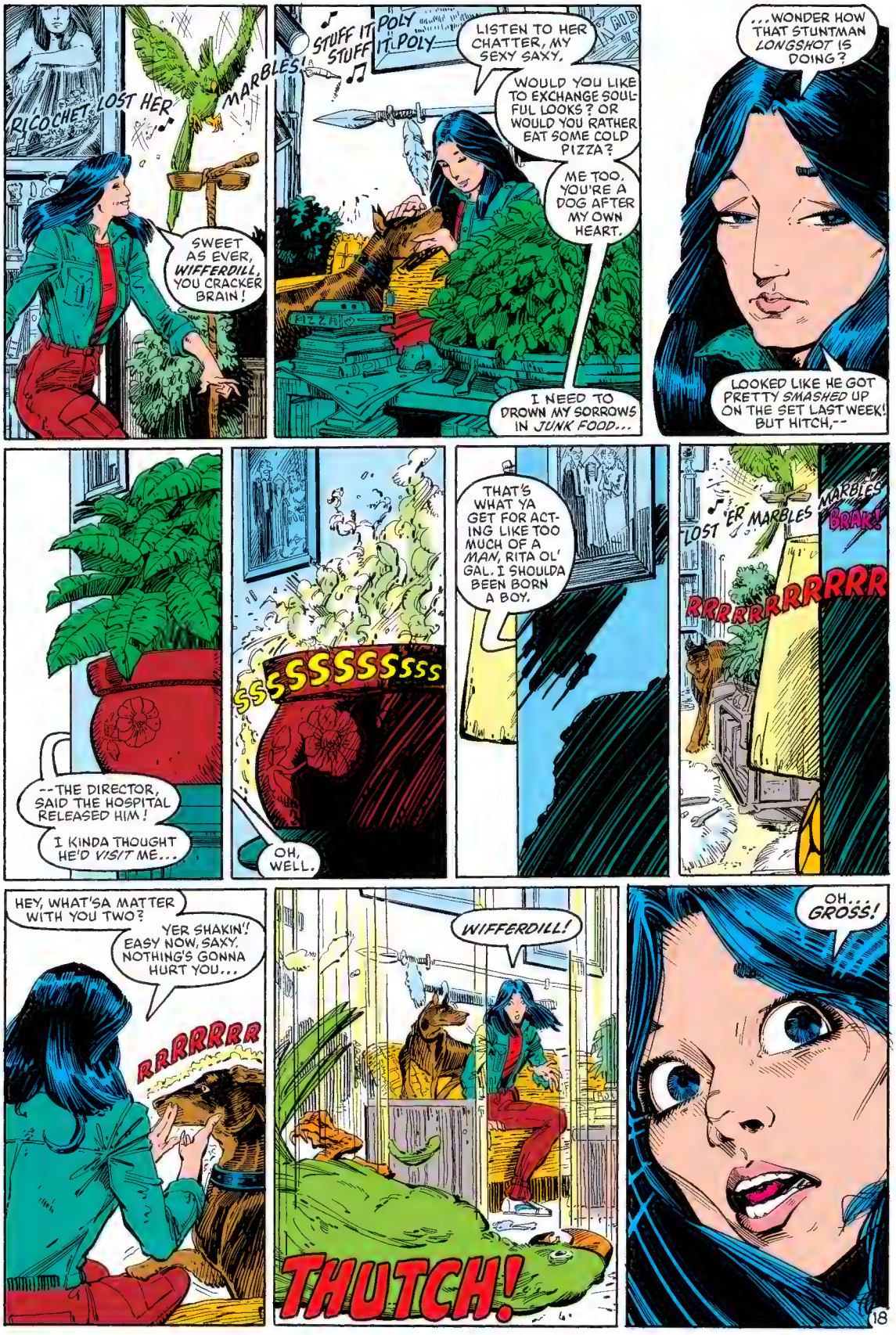
BACK IN NEW YORK...
HEY! WHY DO YOU HATE ME?! I KNOW I RUINED THE PORTAL OPENING FOR YOU GUYS ...BUT I COULDN'T LET YOU KILL A BABY...*
I DIDN'T MEAN TO DRAG YOU INTO THIS DIMENSION IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...OR AT LEAST I THINK I DIDN'T...
...HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHY... UNGH!
KXAK!
QUIT HITTIN' ME!
PORTAL OPENING? DEAD BABY?
*SEE LONGSHOT #1.
DON'T EVEN TALK TO HER.
THERE'S NO POINT.
THE POINT IS...
...TO FOCUS MY SPIRIT...
...THROUGH PURIFICATION OF THE MOTIVE, THE LUCK WILL FOLLOW...
SO WHICH ASYLUM DID YOU BREAK OUT OF... HUH?! HEY, WHAT'S WITH YOUR EYE!?
HOLY...

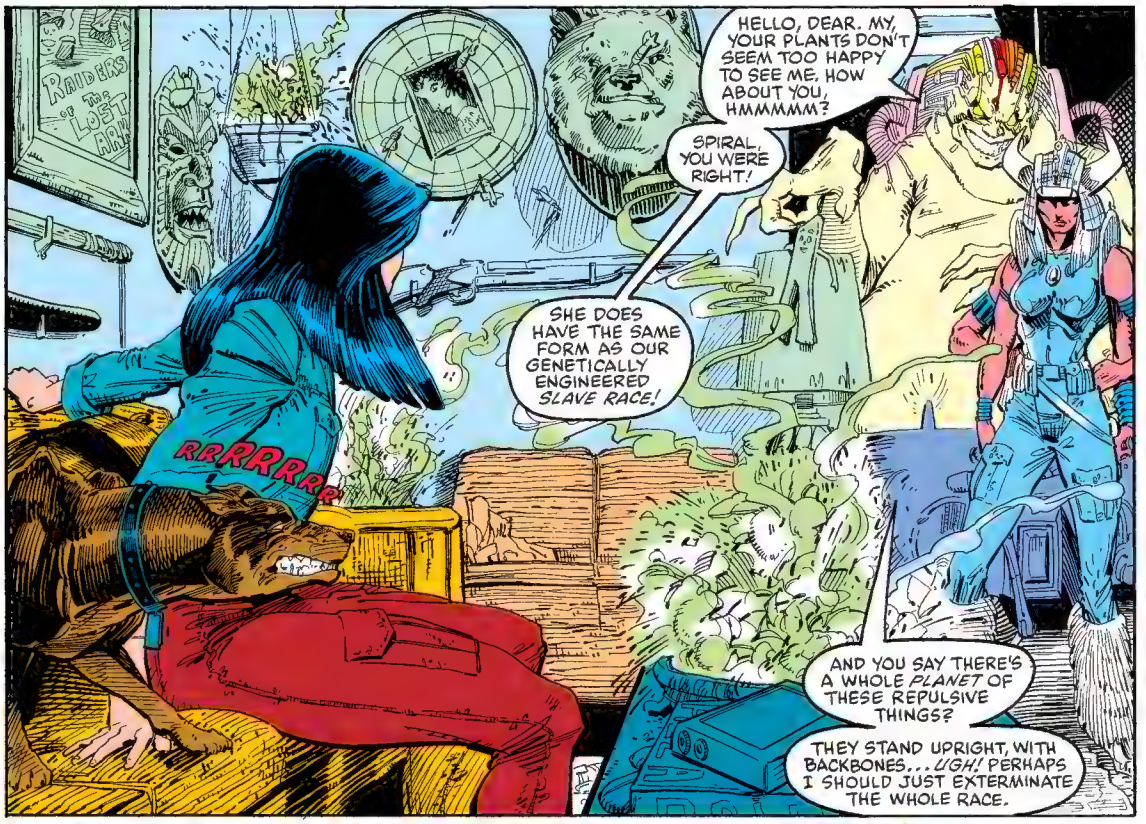

SSSOOOSH
SSSOOOSH
SSSOOOSH
WELL I BLEW THAT ONE. I HAD HIM OUTCLASSED -- BUT HE GOT *LUCKY* AT THE END THERE.
HE'S HUMAN...YET SO ALIEN.
CRAZY AS A LOON...YET SO...FOCUSED.
A MASTER THIEF... MUSTA HURT *HUNDREDS* OF PEOPLE IN THE BLACKOUT ...PROBABLY EVIL AS ALL HECK...
BUT SO DARNED... *HANDSOME!*
CAN'T BELIEVE HE GOT AWAY! HE'S *LUCKY*, ALL RIGHT!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN A FEW PUSH PINS!
CHUK!
CHUK!
CHUK!
CHUK!
HATE TO RUIN A GOOD DESIGNER SWEATER...
RIP!
SNAP!
SNAP!
SNAP!
...BUT IT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT I'M GONNA DO TO...
GONE?
WISH I COULD JUST GO SEE RICOCHET RITA.
BUT I BETTER KEEP RETURNING DIAMONDS TO THE PEOPLE.
COULD JUST THROW THEM INTO THESE WINDOWS...
AUTO-MATIC CAMERA'S WEBBED AND SHOOTING--AND *THERE'S* MY SUBJECT!
HEY BLACKOUT KING, GOT ANY HOT DIAMONDS FOR SALE?
UH-OH...

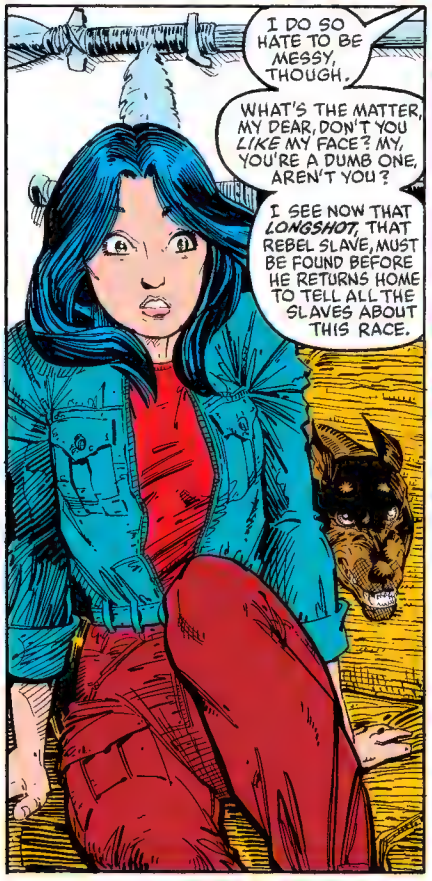

UGH!
WHY'S MY SPIDER-SENSE GOIN' NUTS! CAN'T BE 'CAUSE OF A COMMON THUG LIKE YOU!
WATCH YOUR BACK!
HEY, HOW'D YOU DODGE THAT?
NO, NOT AGAIN!
ANOTHER DEMON! BUT RITA SAYS THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MONSTERS! NOT ON THIS WORLD, ANYWAY. WHY DO I KEEP SEEING THEM?
OOF!
SERVES ME RIGHT FOR GETTING TOO CLOSE TO THE GUY!
WHAT? HE'S GOT A FACE LIKE THAT KID'S MASK! THEY CALLED HIM SPIDER-MAN AND SAID HE WASN'T REAL!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REAL!
HEY, YOUR EYE'S ON FIRE, PUNKO!
YOU'RE FAST, KID, BUT NO MATCH FOR...
HEY! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
SKID!
HEY, PUNKO, IS THAT A HAIRCUT OR A PLANT ON YOUR HEAD?
WHY ALL THESE CRUEL JOKES? WHY DOES HE MOCK ME?

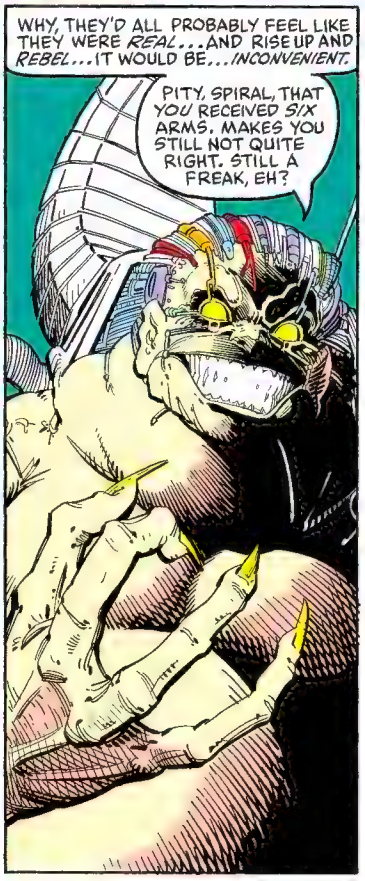

YOU'RE NOT REAL, DEMON! YOU'RE IN MY MIND!
I'M GOING TO GO WAKE UP NOW!
SURE, KID, I'M IN YOUR HEAD-- I'M YOUR OWN PERSONAL DEMON.
BUT HEY, YOU MOVE TOO FAST TO BE ASLEEP...
PLEASE... IT'S NOT FUNNY...
GOT ENOUGH PICTURES, WHY DON'T I JUST WEB HIM UP NOW? BUT HE'S NOT *ACTING* LIKE A *VILLAIN*-- JUST A CONFUSED KID.
COME ON BACK AND PLAY, MOP-HEAD.
PLEASE... IT'S NOT FUNNY...
SNATCH!
NOBODY'S THAT LUCKY! HE'S LIKE THE BLACK CAT... FAST AND AGILE, BUT HE'S ALSO GOT SOME OTHER FORCE THROWIN' PUNCHES FOR HIM.
YEAH, MUSTA BEEN *LUCK*.
HEY!
HOW'D...
WHY THAT...
HE DIDN'T...
GEEZ!
16

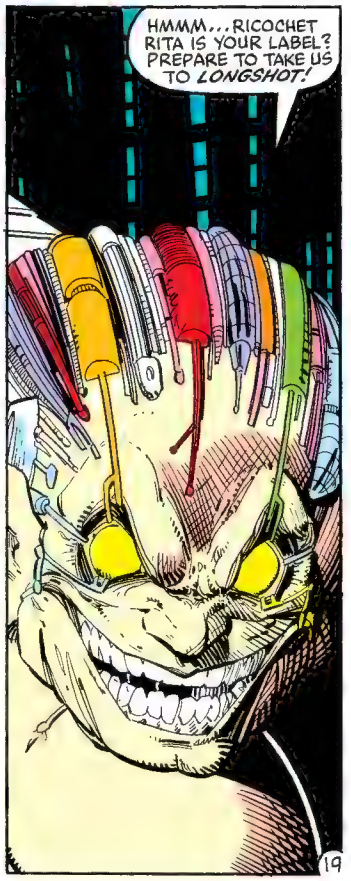

UPSTATE NEW YORK...
DESPITE THE DISTANT BUNGA BUNGA CONGOS THAT BEAT LOUDER... LOUDER... CLOSING IN ON HIM...
...WITH NARY A GLANCE TO THE THIRTY HUNGRY CROCS CIRCLING BELOW...
YAWN
...FEARLESS BEYOND BELIEF...
...TARZAN SWINGS OUT, THROUGH THE BURNING JUNGLE ...AMID POISON ARROWS...
...ACROSS THE UNFATHOMABLE GULF OF THE CANYON...
...HE MAKES IT TO THE CLIFF...
...AND HIS FAITHFUL BLACK PANTHER LEAPS OUT...
...FAITHFUL PANTHER LEAPS OUT...
HEY, FAITHFUL PANTHER!
GET OVER HERE, SAXAPHONE! YOU LAZY BUM!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO PRACTICE MY STUNTS IF YOU CAN'T REMEMBER YOUR CUES?!
OL' RICOCHET RITA WILL BE OUT OF WORK...
AND THAT MEANS SOMEBODY WILL BE OUT OF CANINE CRUNCHIES!
ULP
WELL, LONG AS WE'RE HOME, YOU CAN RELAX. I DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT STUNT UNTIL THEY FINISH THE JUNGLE SET.
LET'S RELAX--
--HOW 'BOUT WE TAKE THE HANG GLIDER UP THE CLIFF AND DO SOME AERIAL STUNTS?
WHAT A MESS, SAX, WHEN YOU GONNA CLEAN THIS PLACE?

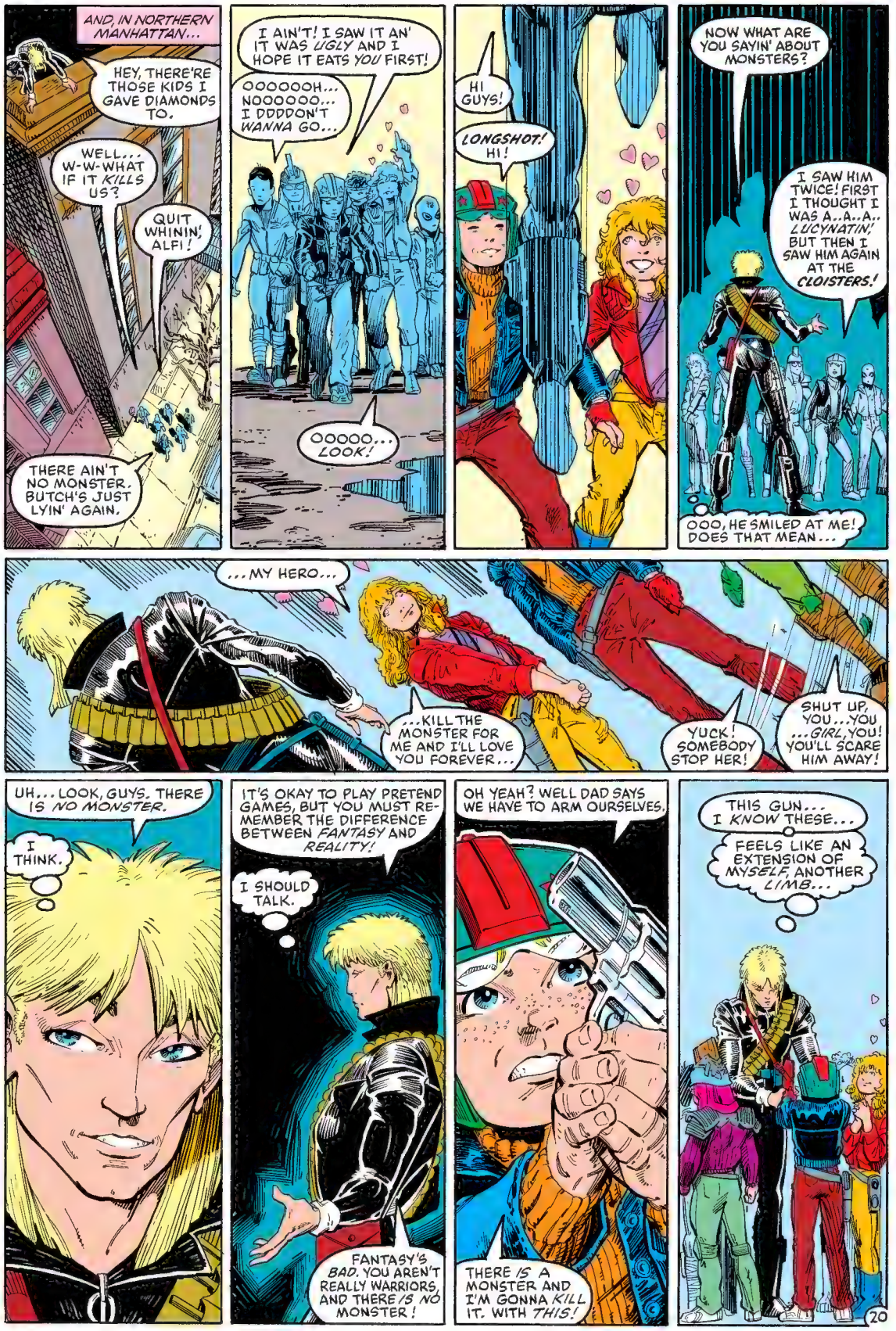

RICOCHET LOST HER MARBLES!
SWEET AS EVER, WIFFERDILL, YOU CRACKER BRAIN!
STUFF IT POLY STUFF IT POLY
LISTEN TO HER CHATTER, MY SEXY SAXY.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXCHANGE SOULFUL LOOKS? OR WOULD YOU RATHER EAT SOME COLD PIZZA?
ME TOO, YOU'RE A DOG AFTER MY OWN HEART.
I NEED TO DROWN MY SORROWS IN JUNK FOOD...
...WONDER HOW THAT STUNTMAN LONGSHOT IS DOING?
LOOKED LIKE HE GOT PRETTY SMASHED UP ON THE SET LAST WEEK! BUT HITCH,--
--THE DIRECTOR, SAID THE HOSPITAL RELEASED HIM!
I KINDA THOUGHT HE'D VISIT ME...
SSSSSSSSS
OH, WELL.
THAT'S WHAT YA GET FOR ACTING LIKE TOO MUCH OF A MAN, RITA OL' GAL. I SHOULDA BEEN BORN A BOY.
LOST 'ER MARBLES
MARBLES
BRAK!
RRRRRRRRRRR
HEY, WHAT'SA MATTER WITH YOU TWO?
YER SHAKIN'! EASY NOW, SAXY. NOTHING'S GONNA HURT YOU...
RRRRRR
WIFFERDILL!
THUTCH!
OH... GROSS!

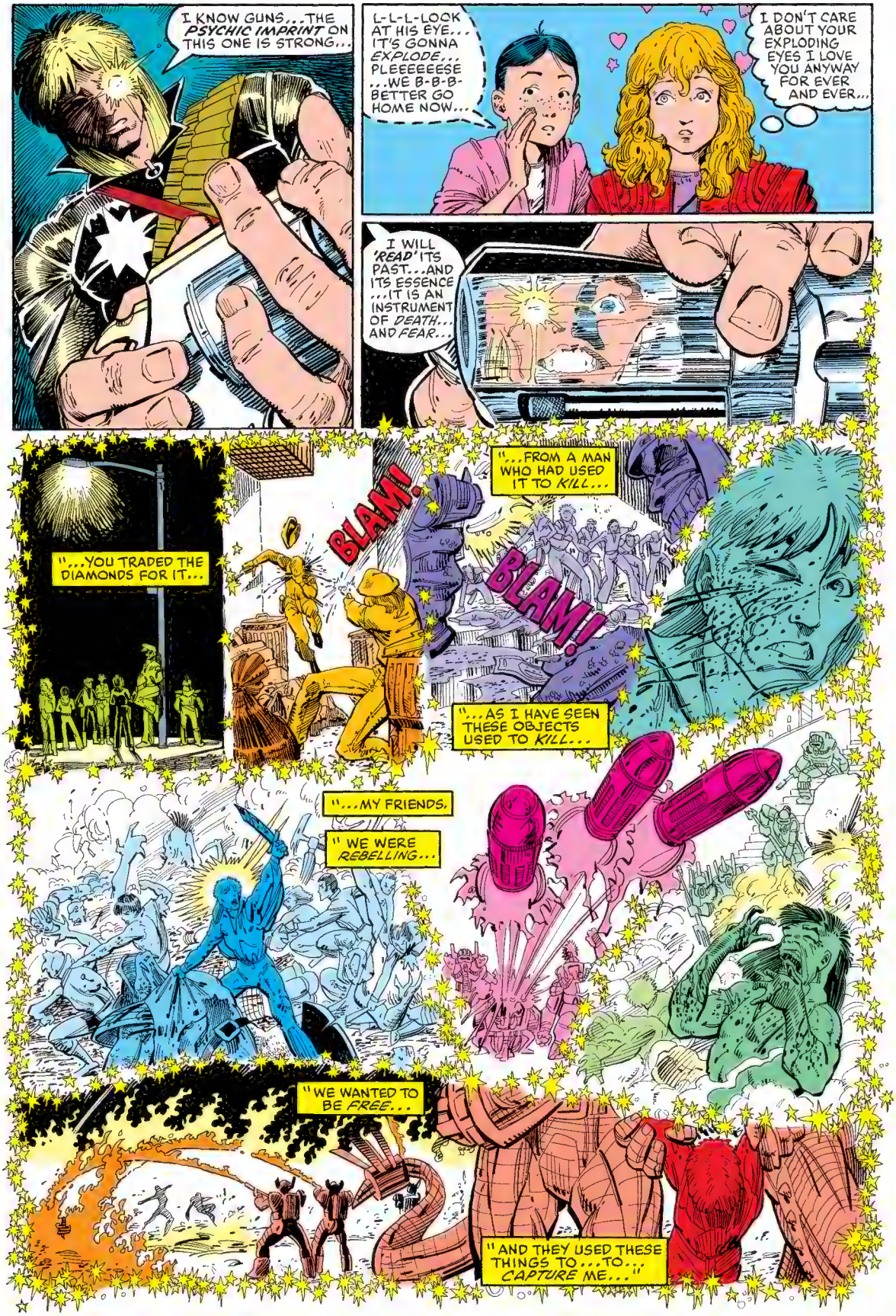

RAIDERS of the LOST ARK
RRRRRRR!
SHE DOES HAVE THE SAME FORM AS OUR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED SLAVE RACE!
SPIRAL, YOU WERE RIGHT!
HELLO, DEAR. MY, YOUR PLANTS DON'T SEEM TOO HAPPY TO SEE ME. HOW ABOUT YOU, HMMMMM?
AND YOU SAY THERE'S A WHOLE PLANET OF THESE REPULSIVE THINGS?
THEY STAND UPRIGHT, WITH BACKBONES... UGH! PERHAPS I SHOULD JUST EXTERMINATE THE WHOLE RACE.


I DO SO HATE TO BE MESSY, THOUGH.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MY DEAR, DON'T YOU LIKE MY FACE? MY, YOU'RE A DUMB ONE, AREN'T YOU?
I SEE NOW THAT LONGSHOT, THAT REBEL SLAVE, MUST BE FOUND BEFORE HE RETURNS HOME TO TELL ALL THE SLAVES ABOUT THIS RACE.

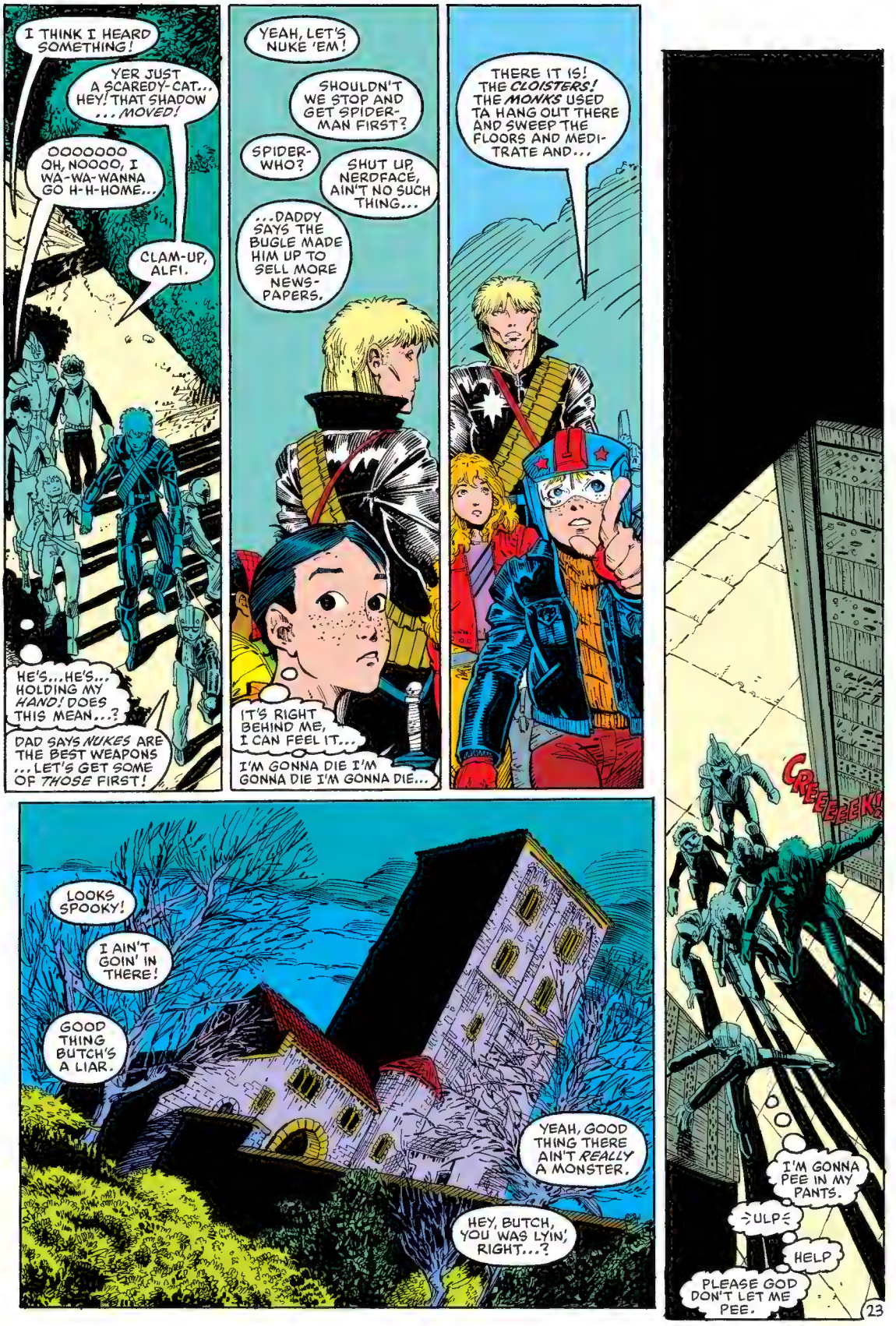

WHY, THEY'D ALL PROBABLY FEEL LIKE THEY WERE REAL... AND RISE UP AND REBEL... IT WOULD BE... INCONVENIENT.
PITY, SPIRAL, THAT YOU RECEIVED SIX ARMS. MAKES YOU STILL NOT QUITE RIGHT. STILL A FREAK, EH?

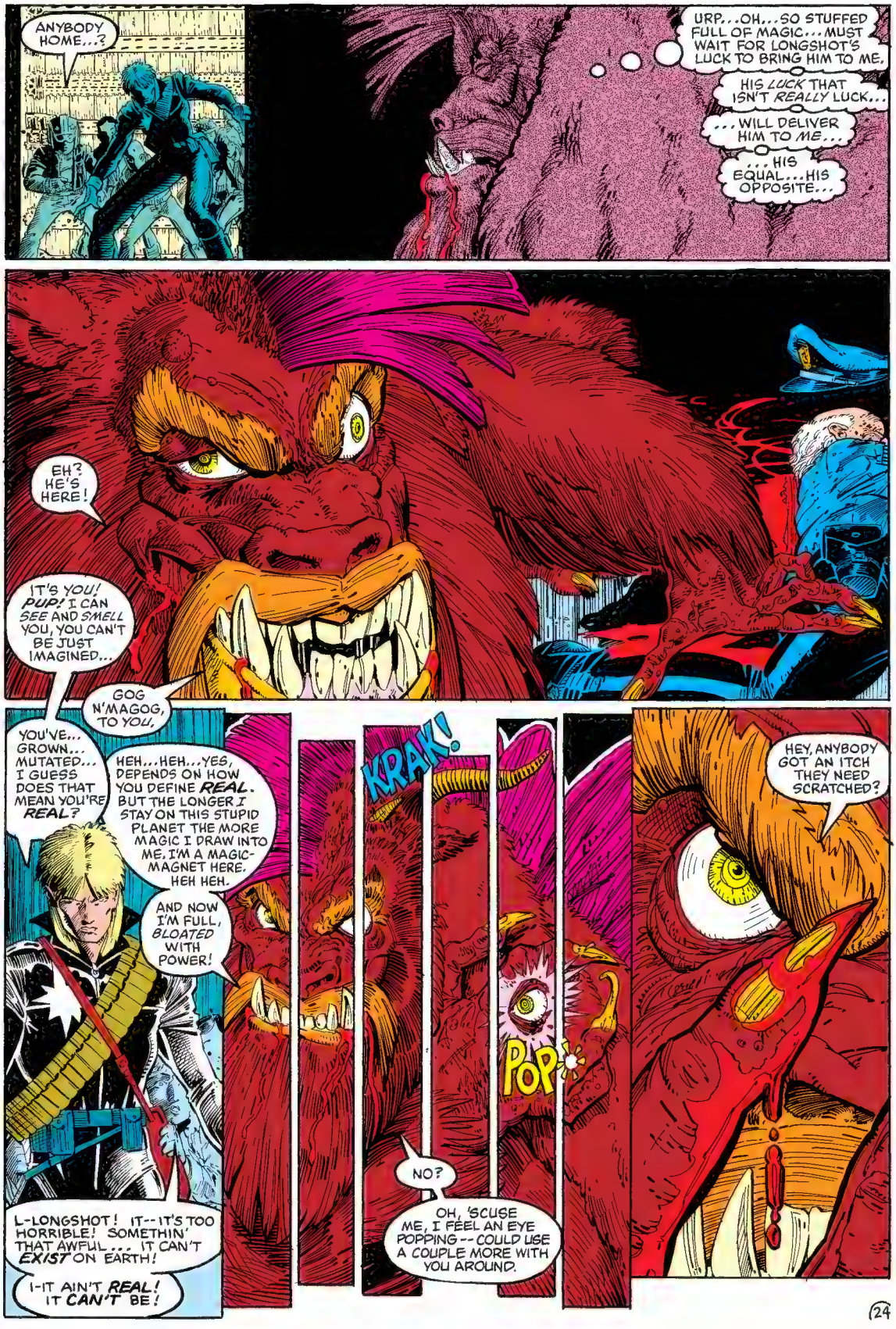

HMMM... RICOCHET RITA IS YOUR LABEL? PREPARE TO TAKE US TO LONGSHOT!


AND, IN NORTHERN MANHATTAN...
HEY, THERE'RE THOSE KIDS I GAVE DIAMONDS TO.
WELL... W-W-WHAT IF IT KILLS US?
QUIT WHININ', ALFI!
THERE AIN'T NO MONSTER. BUTCH'S JUST LYIN' AGAIN.
I AIN'T! I SAW IT AN' IT WAS UGLY AND I HOPE IT EATS YOU FIRST!
OOOOOOH... NOOOOOO... I DDDDON'T WANNA GO...
OOOOO... LOOK!
HI GUYS!
LONGSHOT! HI!
NOW WHAT ARE YOU SAYIN' ABOUT MONSTERS?
I SAW HIM TWICE! FIRST I THOUGHT I WAS A..A..A.. LUCYNATIN! BUT THEN I SAW HIM AGAIN AT THE CLOISTERS!
OOO, HE SMILED AT ME! DOES THAT MEAN...
...MY HERO...
...KILL THE MONSTER FOR ME AND I'LL LOVE YOU FOREVER...
YUCK! SOMEBODY STOP HER!
SHUT UP, YOU...YOU ...GIRL, YOU! YOU'LL SCARE HIM AWAY!
UH... LOOK, GUYS. THERE IS NO MONSTER.
I THINK.
IT'S OKAY TO PLAY PRETEND GAMES, BUT YOU MUST REMEMBER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY!
I SHOULD TALK.
FANTASY'S BAD. YOU AREN'T REALLY WARRIORS, AND THERE IS NO MONSTER!
OH YEAH? WELL DAD SAYS WE HAVE TO ARM OURSELVES.
THERE IS A MONSTER AND I'M GONNA KILL IT. WITH THIS!
THIS GUN... I KNOW THESE...
FEELS LIKE AN EXTENSION OF MYSELF, ANOTHER LIMB...


I KNOW GUNS...THE PSYCHIC IMPRINT ON THIS ONE IS STRONG...
L-L-L-LOOK AT HIS EYE... IT'S GONNA EXPLODE... PLEEEEEESE ...WE B-B-B-BETTER GO HOME NOW...
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR EXPLODING EYES I LOVE YOU ANYWAY FOR EVER AND EVER...
I WILL 'READ' ITS PAST...AND ITS ESSENCE ...IT IS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH... AND FEAR...
"...YOU TRADED THE DIAMONDS FOR IT...
BLAM!
BLAM!
"...FROM A MAN WHO HAD USED IT TO KILL...
"...AS I HAVE SEEN THESE OBJECTS USED TO KILL...
"...MY FRIENDS,
" WE WERE REBELLING...
" WE WANTED TO BE FREE...
" AND THEY USED THESE THINGS TO...TO... CAPTURE ME..."

MY CREATORS...THE SPINELESS ONES...
...HAD MADE ME TO SERVE THEM. BUT I HAD BECOME MUCH MORE...
--TOO FREE TO BE A SLAVE...
A MINDWIPE!
CLICK
...THEY WIPED MY MIND...
...MY MEMORIES...
...LEFT ME DROOLING... EYES EMPTY PITS, WINDOWS TO A HOLLOW MIND...
...I WAS A GOOD SLAVE AGAIN.
OOOOOOOOOO...
...EARTH TO LONGSHOT, CALLING LONGSHOT...
LONG-SHOT MY LOVE!
MY LOVE? OH, GEEZ...
YOU OKAY, MISTER LONGSHOT?
HEY, WHERE'D YOU GET THE NEAT SCAR FROM?
SO WHEN DID I ESCAPE? WHAT WAS I GOING TO DO NEXT? HOW CAN I TRUST MY OWN MEMORIES!?
OKAY, GUYS--
--SHOW ME YOUR MONSTER, AND I'LL SHOW YOU THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY!


I THINK I HEARD SOMETHING!
YER JUST A SCAREDY-CAT... HEY! THAT SHADOW ...MOVED!
OOOOOOO OH, NOOOO, I WA-WA-WANNA GO H-H-HOME...
CLAM-UP, ALFI.
HE'S...HE'S... HOLDING MY HAND! DOES THIS MEAN...?
DAD SAYS NUKES ARE THE BEST WEAPONS ...LET'S GET SOME OF THOSE FIRST!
YEAH, LET'S NUKE 'EM!
SHOULDN'T WE STOP AND GET SPIDER-MAN FIRST?
SPIDER-WHO?
SHUT UP, NERDFACE, AIN'T NO SUCH THING...
...DADDY SAYS THE BUGLE MADE HIM UP TO SELL MORE NEWS-PAPERS.
IT'S RIGHT BEHIND ME, I CAN FEEL IT...
I'M GONNA DIE I'M GONNA DIE I'M GONNA DIE...
THERE IT IS! THE CLOISTERS! THE MONKS USED TA HANG OUT THERE AND SWEEP THE FLOORS AND MEDI-TRATE AND...
LOOKS SPOOKY!
I AIN'T GOIN' IN THERE!
GOOD THING BUTCH'S A LIAR.
YEAH, GOOD THING THERE AIN'T REALLY A MONSTER.
HEY, BUTCH, YOU WAS LYIN', RIGHT...?
CREEEEEEK!
I'M GONNA PEE IN MY PANTS.
=ULP=
HELP
PLEASE GOD DON'T LET ME PEE.


ANYBODY HOME...?
URP...OH...SO STUFFED FULL OF MAGIC...MUST WAIT FOR LONGSHOT'S LUCK TO BRING HIM TO ME.
HIS LUCK THAT ISN'T REALLY LUCK...
...WILL DELIVER HIM TO ME...
...HIS EQUAL...HIS OPPOSITE...
EH? HE'S HERE!
IT'S YOU! PUP! I CAN SEE AND SMELL YOU, YOU CAN'T BE JUST IMAGINED...
GOG N'MAGOG, TO YOU.
YOU'VE... GROWN... MUTATED... I GUESS DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE REAL?
HEH...HEH...YES, DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE REAL. BUT THE LONGER I STAY ON THIS STUPID PLANET THE MORE MAGIC I DRAW INTO ME. I'M A MAGIC-MAGNET HERE. HEH HEH.
AND NOW I'M FULL, BLOATED WITH POWER!
L-LONGSHOT! IT-- IT'S TOO HORRIBLE! SOMETHIN' THAT AWFUL... IT CAN'T EXIST ON EARTH!
I-IT AIN'T REAL! IT CAN'T BE!
KRAK!
NO?
OH, 'SCUSE ME, I FEEL AN EYE POPPING -- COULD USE A COUPLE MORE WITH YOU AROUND.
POP!
HEY, ANYBODY GOT AN ITCH THEY NEED SCRATCHED?

UGH! HOW DO YOU KNOW GOG'S NOT REAL? HOW CAN YOU TELL? I CAN HEAR HIM AND SEE HIM AND...
THAT DON'T MEAN NUTHIN'! WE SEE MONSTERS ALL THE TIME... IN THE MOVIES AN' IN COMICS AN' ON TV AN' STUFF...
...BUT MOM SAYS THEY AIN'T REAL!
THEY'RE JUST TRICKS... SPECIAL EFFECTS N' MAKE-UP N' STUFF!
YEAH! GOOD THING YOU WAS LYIN' 'BOUT THE MONSTER, BUTCH!
I'M ALWAYS LYIN'! I LIKE MAKIN' STUFF UP!
YEAH, HE'S NOT REALLY REAL.
I GET IT! REALITY IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT, HERE! AND GOG'S TRYING TO MAKE IT MONSTROUS!
LOOK, IF YOU'RE GONNA BE A MONSTER, GOG, THEN I CAN'T BELIEVE IN YOU!
BUT PUPS ARE REAL! WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO BEIN' ONE OF--
WHAM!
HARD TO KNOW WHAT'S REAL IN THIS WORLD, EH, LONGSHOT, 'TIL IT SLAMS YOU IN THE FACE!?
NOT REAL? ME?!?
LONGSHOT, YOU CAN'T CLOSE YOUR EYES TO IT! YOU GOTTA FACE MY REALITY!
NOW, ANYBODY ELSE OUT THERE WANNA TELL ME I'M NOT REAL?
NEXT: DEADLY LIES!
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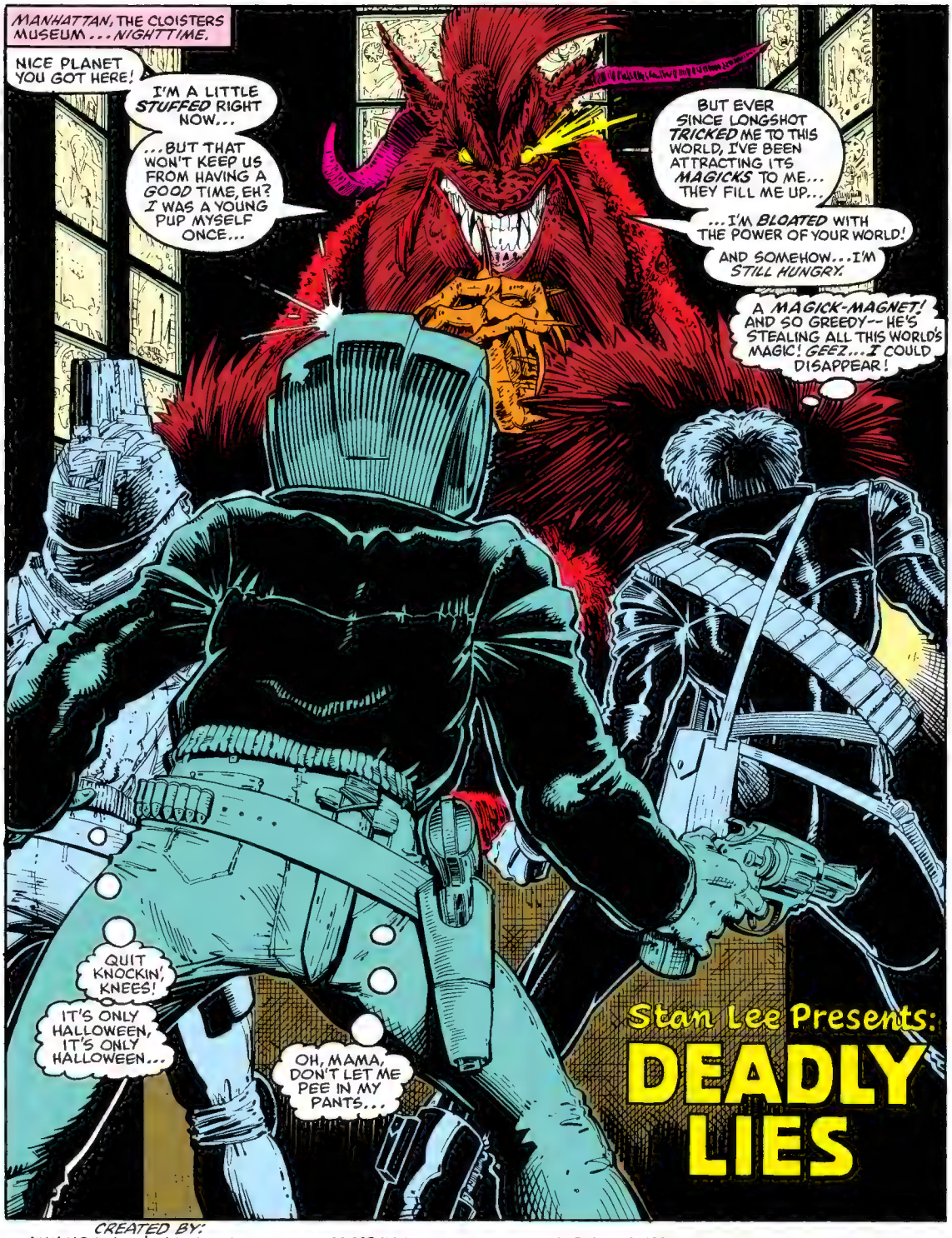
MANHATTAN, THE CLOISTERS MUSEUM... NIGHTTIME.
NICE PLANET YOU GOT HERE!
I'M A LITTLE STUFFED RIGHT NOW...
...BUT THAT WON'T KEEP US FROM HAVING A GOOD TIME, EH? I WAS A YOUNG PUP MYSELF ONCE...
BUT EVER SINCE LONGSHOT TRICKED ME TO THIS WORLD, I'VE BEEN ATTRACTING ITS MAGICKS TO ME... THEY FILL ME UP...
...I'M BLOATED WITH THE POWER OF YOUR WORLD!
AND SOMEHOW...I'M STILL HUNGRY.
A MAGICK-MAGNET! AND SO GREEDY-- HE'S STEALING ALL THIS WORLD'S MAGIC! GEEZ... I COULD DISAPPEAR!
QUIT KNOCKIN', KNEES!
IT'S ONLY HALLOWEEN, IT'S ONLY HALLOWEEN...
OH, MAMA, DON'T LET ME PEE IN MY PANTS...
Stan Lee Presents:
DEADLY LIES

CREATED BY:
ANN NOCENTI & ARTHUR ADAMS
WRITER • PENCILER • INKER • LETTERS • COLORS • EDITOR • EDITOR IN CHIEF
WHILCE PORTACIO
JOE ROSEN
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
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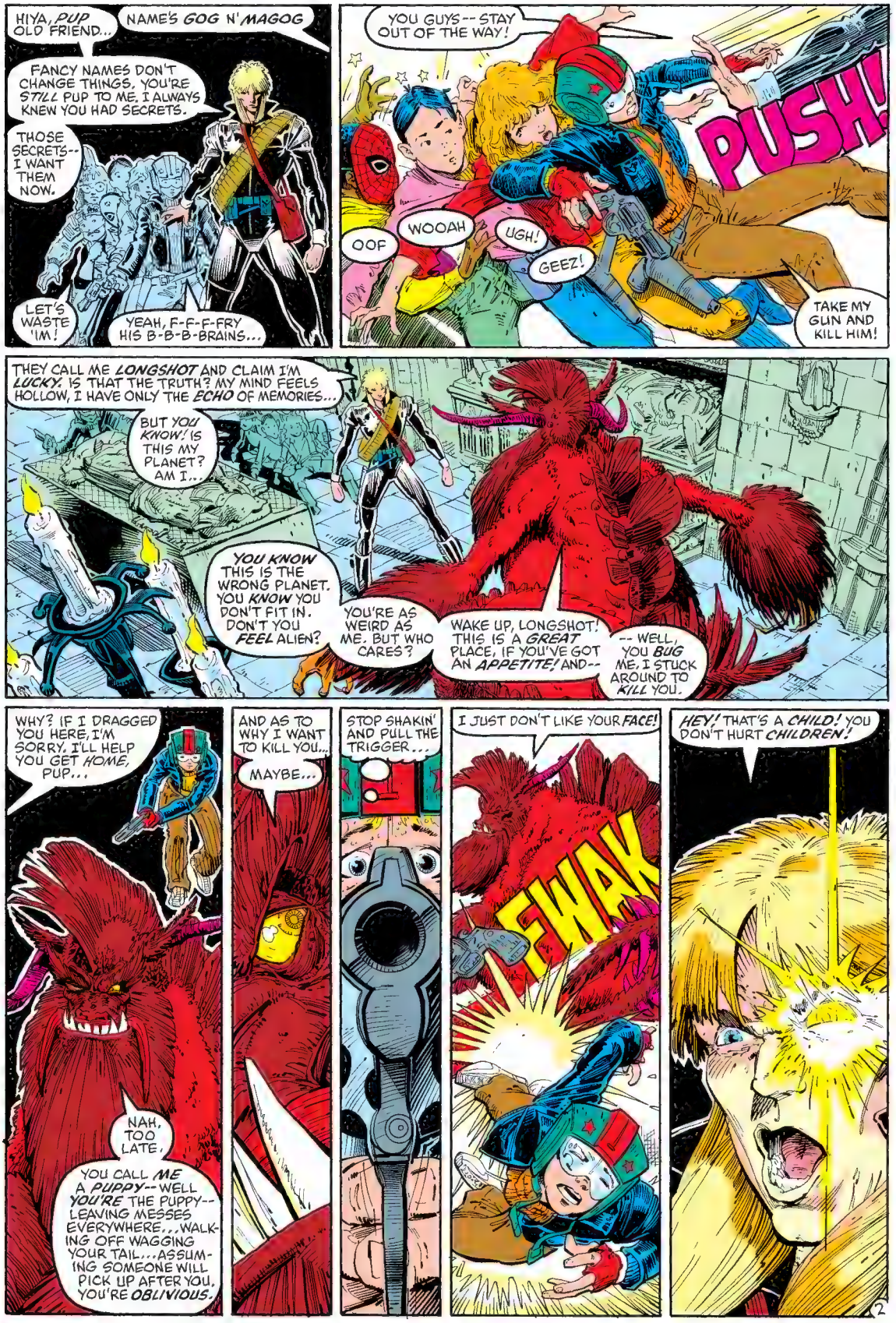
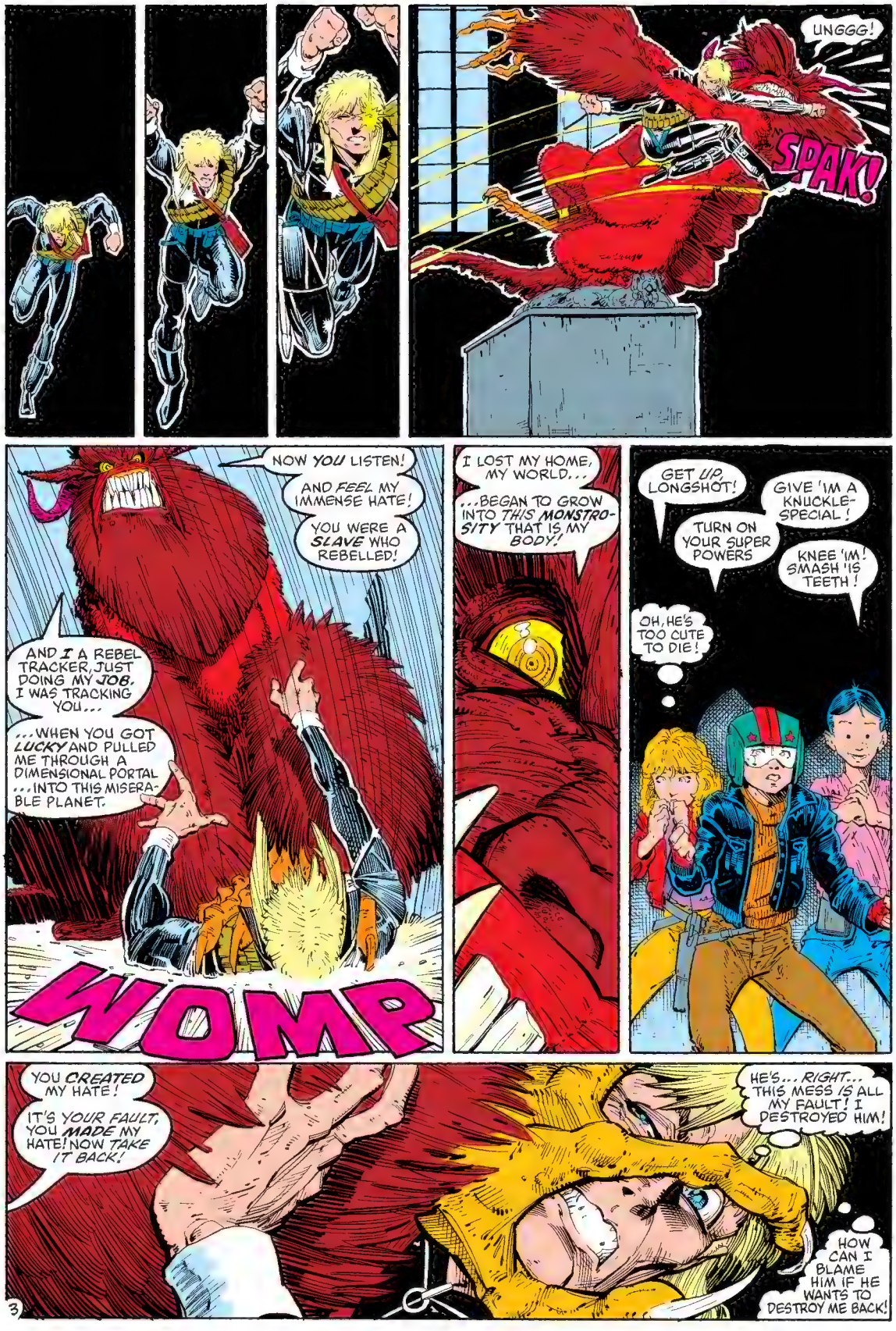
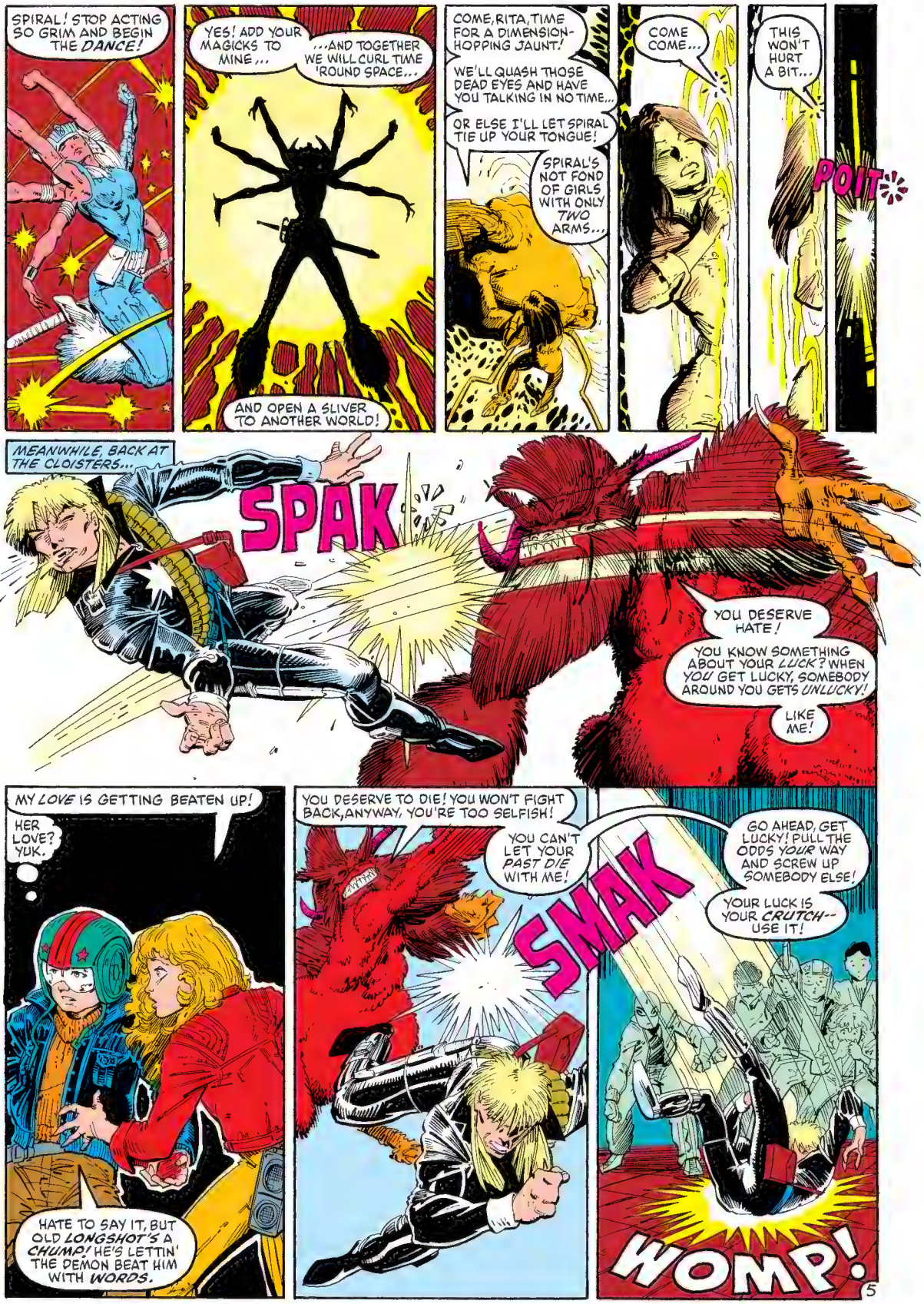
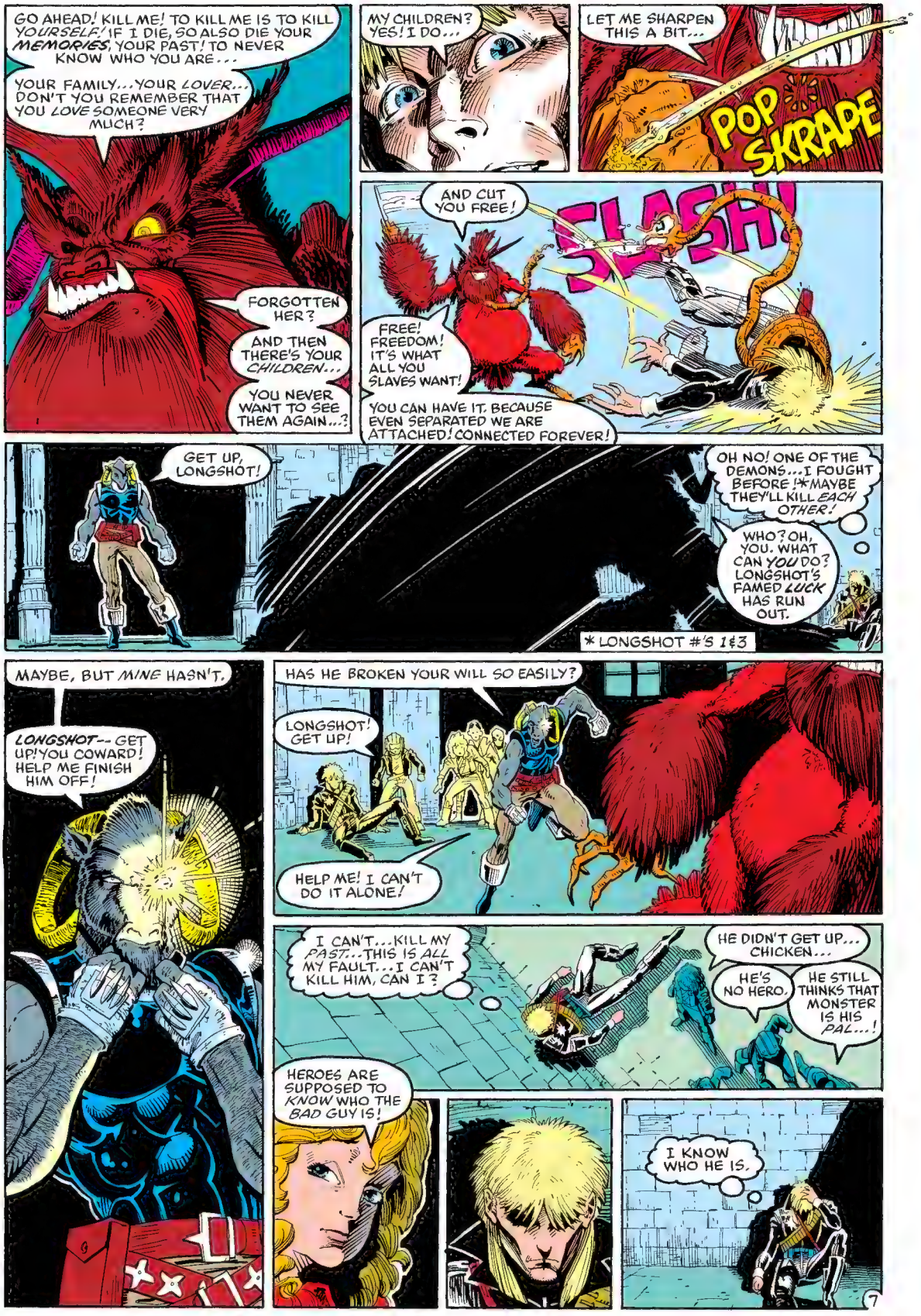

HIYA, PUP OLD FRIEND...
NAME'S GOG N' MAGOG
FANCY NAMES DON'T CHANGE THINGS, YOU'RE STILL PUP TO ME. I ALWAYS KNEW YOU HAD SECRETS.
THOSE SECRETS-- I WANT THEM NOW.
LET'S WASTE 'IM!
YEAH, F-F-F-FRY HIS B-B-B-BRAINS...
YOU GUYS-- STAY OUT OF THE WAY!
PUSH!
OOF
WOOAH
UGH!
GEEZ!
TAKE MY GUN AND KILL HIM!
THEY CALL ME LONGSHOT AND CLAIM I'M LUCKY. IS THAT THE TRUTH? MY MIND FEELS HOLLOW, I HAVE ONLY THE ECHO OF MEMORIES...
BUT YOU KNOW! IS THIS MY PLANET? AM I...
YOU KNOW THIS IS THE WRONG PLANET. YOU KNOW YOU DON'T FIT IN. DON'T YOU FEEL ALIEN?
YOU'RE AS WEIRD AS ME. BUT WHO CARES?
WAKE UP, LONGSHOT! THIS IS A GREAT PLACE, IF YOU'VE GOT AN APPETITE! AND--
-- WELL, YOU BUG ME, I STUCK AROUND TO KILL YOU.
WHY? IF I DRAGGED YOU HERE, I'M SORRY. I'LL HELP YOU GET HOME, PUP...
NAH, TOO LATE.
YOU CALL ME A PUPPY-- WELL YOU'RE THE PUPPY-- LEAVING MESSES EVERYWHERE... WALKING OFF WAGGING YOUR TAIL... ASSUMING SOMEONE WILL PICK UP AFTER YOU. YOU'RE OBLIVIOUS.
AND AS TO WHY I WANT TO KILL YOU...
MAYBE...
STOP SHAKIN' AND PULL THE TRIGGER...
I JUST DON'T LIKE YOUR FACE!
FWAK
HEY! THAT'S A CHILD! YOU DON'T HURT CHILDREN!

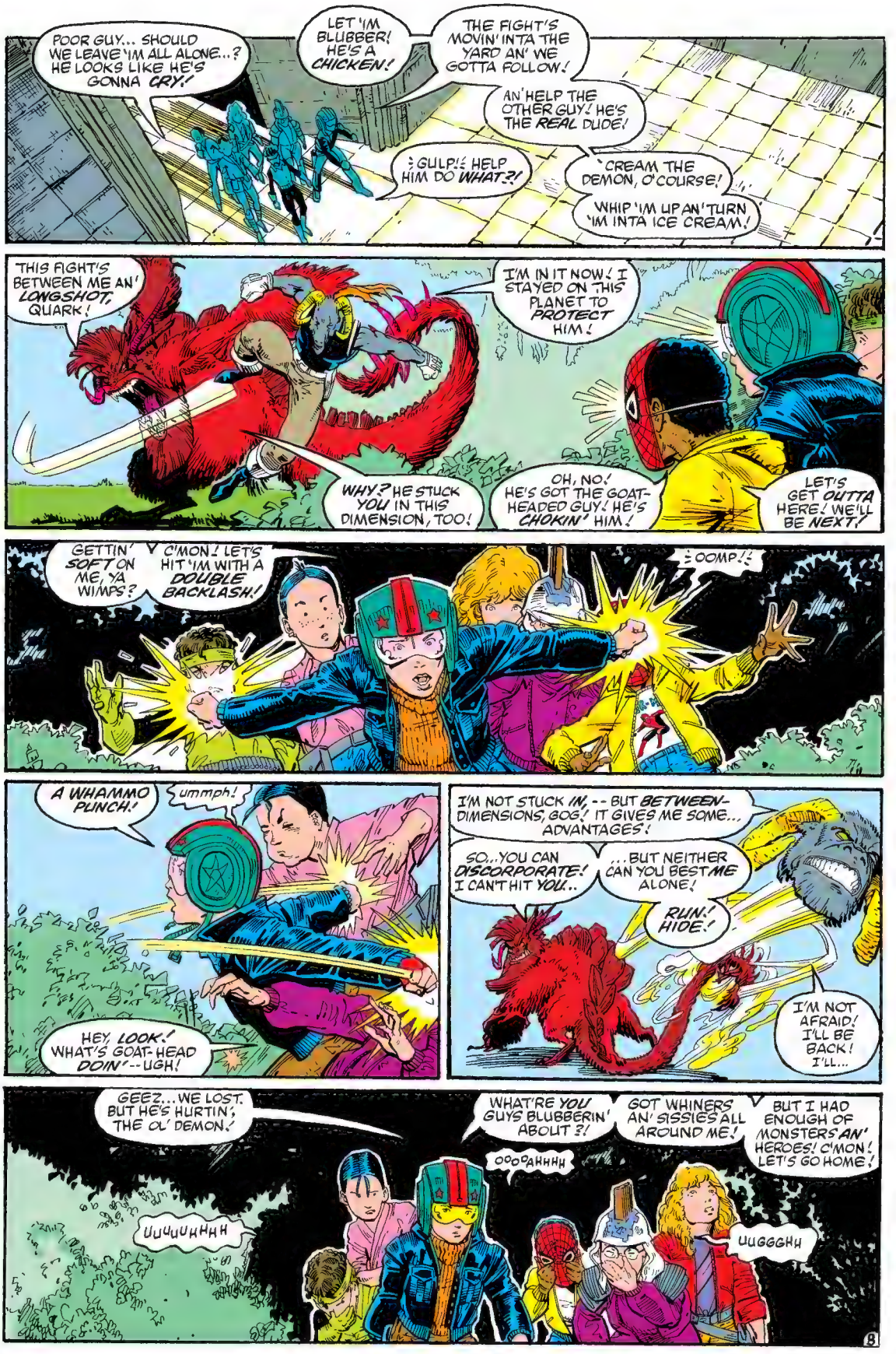

UNGGG!
SPAK!
NOW YOU LISTEN!
AND FEEL MY IMMENSE HATE!
YOU WERE A SLAVE WHO REBELLED!
AND I A REBEL TRACKER, JUST DOING MY JOB. I WAS TRACKING YOU...
...WHEN YOU GOT LUCKY AND PULLED ME THROUGH A DIMENSIONAL PORTAL ...INTO THIS MISERABLE PLANET.
WOMP
I LOST MY HOME, MY WORLD...
...BEGAN TO GROW INTO THIS MONSTROSITY THAT IS MY BODY!
GET UP, LONGSHOT!
GIVE 'IM A KNUCKLE-SPECIAL!
TURN ON YOUR SUPER POWERS
KNEE 'IM! SMASH 'IS TEETH!
OH, HE'S TOO CUTE TO DIE!
YOU CREATED MY HATE!
IT'S YOUR FAULT, YOU MADE MY HATE! NOW TAKE IT BACK!
HE'S... RIGHT... THIS MESS IS ALL MY FAULT! I DESTROYED HIM!
HOW CAN I BLAME HIM IF HE WANTS TO DESTROY ME BACK!

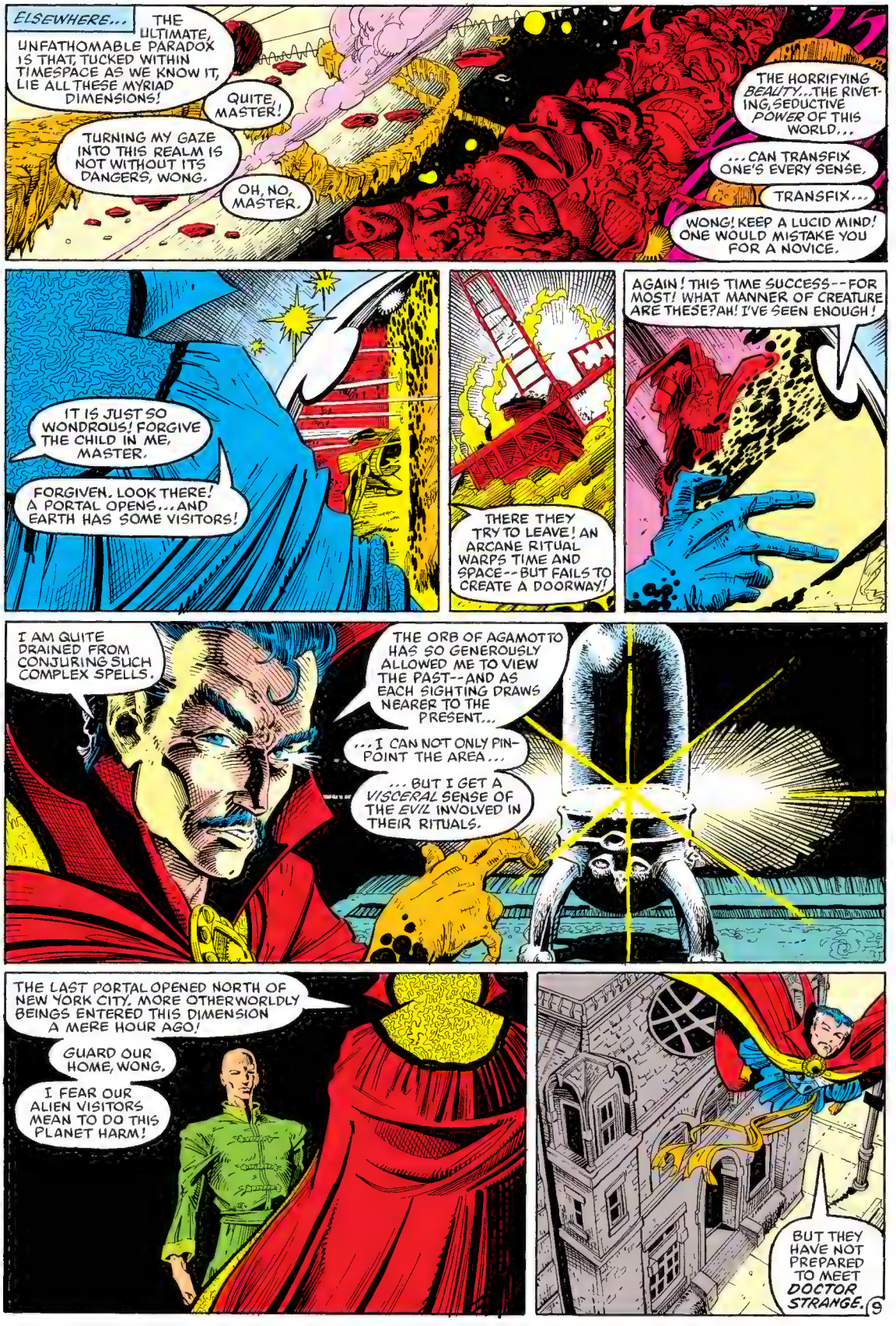
MEANWHILE, IN UPSTATE NEW YORK...
YOU'VE GOT ONE OF THOSE REPULSIVE SPINES!
I DETECT ONLY ONE HEART-BEAT--BUT YOU DO HAVE THE RIGHT NUMBER OF LIMBS... BUT TOO MANY FINGERS!
AND UGLY... NO PERHAPS PRETTY...
LET'S CUT HER OPEN AND SEE WHAT'S INSIDE!
BUT DEAD EYES! TOO SILENT! I'LL GIVE YOU STONE SILENT GRAVE-STONE DEADNESS...
THOOMP!
MY DESIGNER GENETICALLY ENGI-NEERED SLAVES FROM ONE OF OUR MOST ANCIENT, NIGHTMARISH MYTHOLOGICAL IMAGES --
--AND NOW I FIND A WHOLE STUPID PLANET WHERE YOU DEVILS ACTUALLY EXIST--
THUP
--MAKING OUR MYTHS REAL!
THE SLAVES MUST NEVER KNOW! THEY'D FEEL REAL AND MIGHT DO SOMETHING OBNOXIOUS, LIKE WANT RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS... DON'T YOU AGREE, SPIRAL?
I'M ONE OF THOSE SLAVES, MOJO, AND YOU KNOW IT! I'LL SPLIT FROM YOU AND STAY ON THIS PLANET-- I'D BE FREE HERE!
OH, GOODY! YOU'LL BE SUCH A HIT, WITH ALL THOSE EXTRA ARMS! THEY'LL LOVE YOU! PROBABLY GIVE YOU YOUR OWN CAGE!
WELL RICOCHET RITA... WE CAN'T LET YOUR PAL LONGSHOT GET BACK TO OUR DIMENSION-- IF HIS FELLOW SLAVES LEARNED ABOUT THIS PLACE...
YOU TELL ME WHERE HE IS, OR MOJO THE LIFEBRINGER WILL MAKE YOU YOUNG AGAIN!
NEVER...
OOOPS! YOU SEEM TO BE GOING THE WRONG WAY--YOU'RE GETTING OLDER! OH, WELL... WHAT'S A LITTLE BALDNESS AND FLAKE...

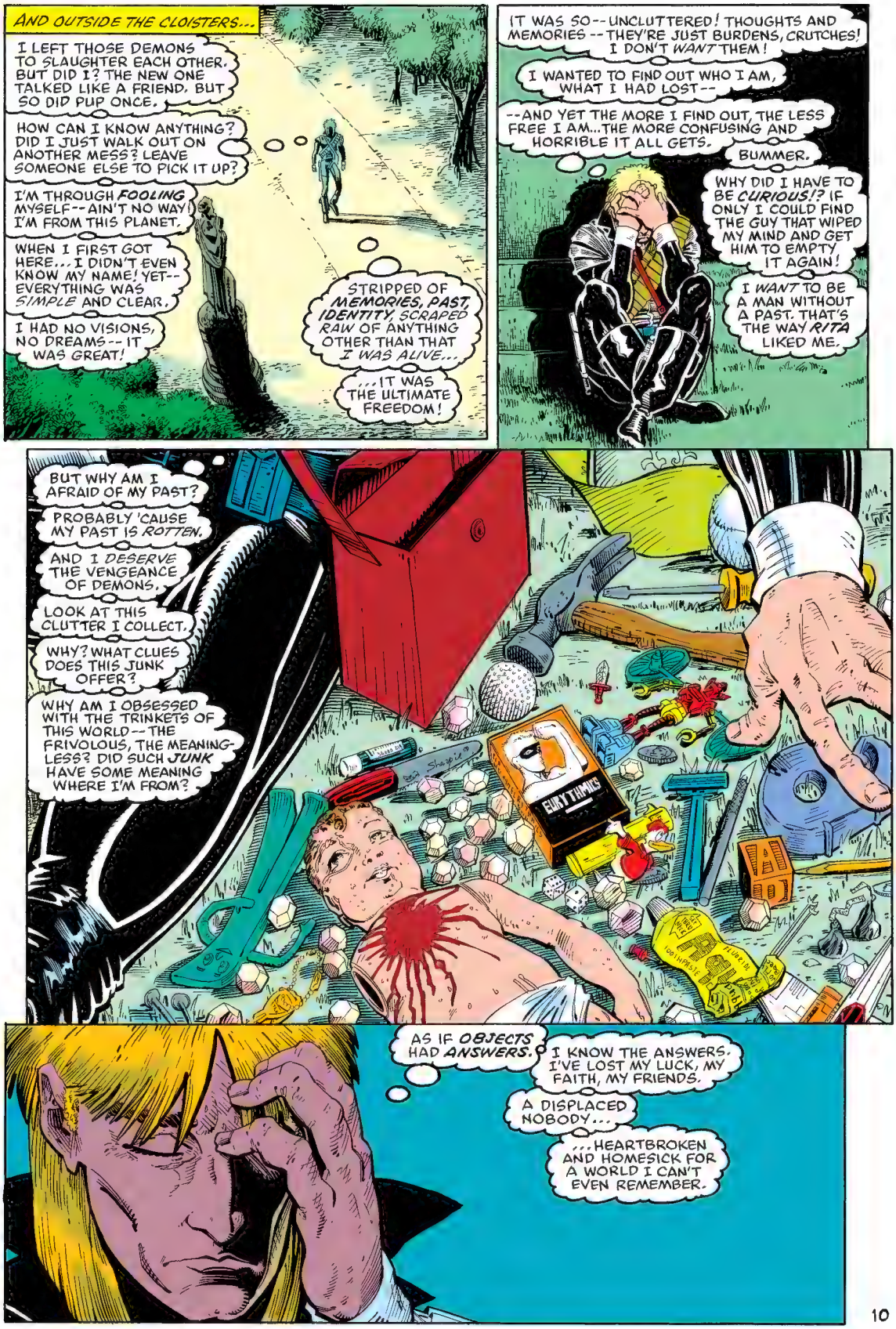

SPIRAL! STOP ACTING SO GRIM AND BEGIN THE DANCE!
YES! ADD YOUR MAGICKS TO MINE...
...AND TOGETHER WE WILL CURL TIME 'ROUND SPACE...
AND OPEN A SLIVER TO ANOTHER WORLD!
COME, RITA, TIME FOR A DIMENSION-HOPPING JAUNT!
WE'LL QUASH THOSE DEAD EYES AND HAVE YOU TALKING IN NO TIME...
OR ELSE I'LL LET SPIRAL TIE UP YOUR TONGUE!
SPIRAL'S NOT FOND OF GIRLS WITH ONLY TWO ARMS...
COME COME...
THIS WON'T HURT A BIT...
POIT
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE CLOISTERS...
SPAK
YOU DESERVE HATE!
YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR LUCK? WHEN YOU GET LUCKY, SOMEBODY AROUND YOU GETS UNLUCKY!
LIKE ME!
MY LOVE IS GETTING BEATEN UP!
HER LOVE? YUK.
HATE TO SAY IT, BUT OLD LONGSHOT'S A CHUMP! HE'S LETTIN' THE DEMON BEAT HIM WITH WORDS.
YOU DESERVE TO DIE! YOU WON'T FIGHT BACK, ANYWAY, YOU'RE TOO SELFISH!
YOU CAN'T LET YOUR PAST DIE WITH ME!
SMAK
GO AHEAD, GET LUCKY! PULL THE ODDS YOUR WAY AND SCREW UP SOMEBODY ELSE!
YOUR LUCK IS YOUR CRUTCH-- USE IT!
WOMP!

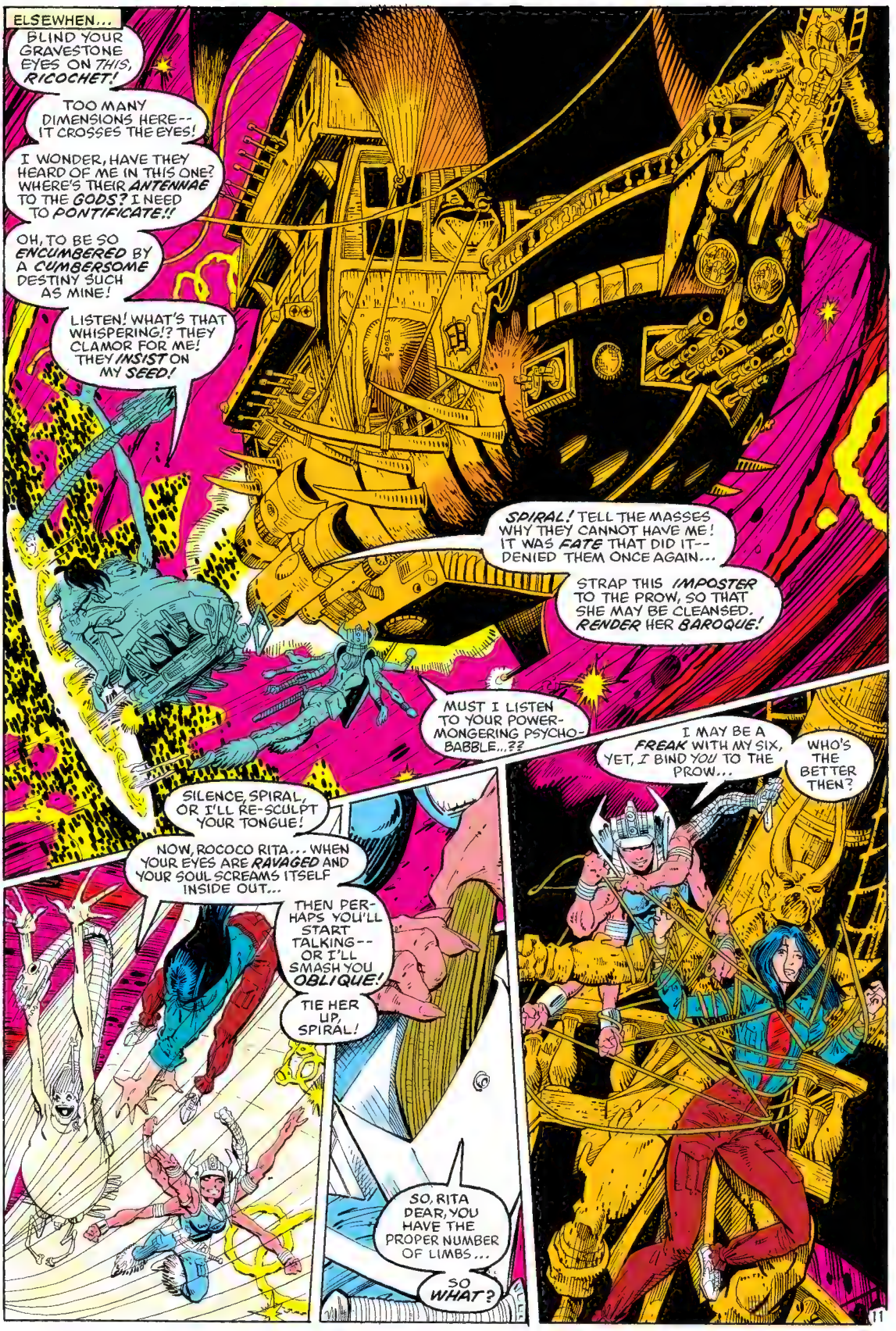
WHAT A COWARD...
GEEZ, LOOKIT 'IM JUST LYIN' THERE...
I THOUGHT HE WAS BRAVE...
MAYBE HE AIN'T SO CUTE...
I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN! THEY BELIEVED IN ME! BUT MAYBE PUP'S RIGHT, I'M SELFISH! I MUST GET MY MOTIVES PURE!
HE'S EVIL AND I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM! FOR THE GOOD OF THE WORLD AND FOR THE DREAMS OF THESE CHILDREN!
ALL RIGHT, GOG N'MAGOG!
WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT LUCK OR MY PAST?!
SQUETCH
I HAVE YOU NOW! I COULD KILL YOU IN A SNAP!
SO WHY DON'T YOU, HMMMM? STILL THINK WE'RE FRIENDS? HAHA-- YOU'RE SO WEAK! YOU STILL WANT US TO KISS AND MAKE UP?
WELL, YOU'RE NOT MY TYPE, BUT WE DO SEEM TO BE ATTACHED!
THERE'S A LIFELINE BETWEEN US... FEEL OUR UNHOLY ALLIANCE... OUR FATED CONNECTION...

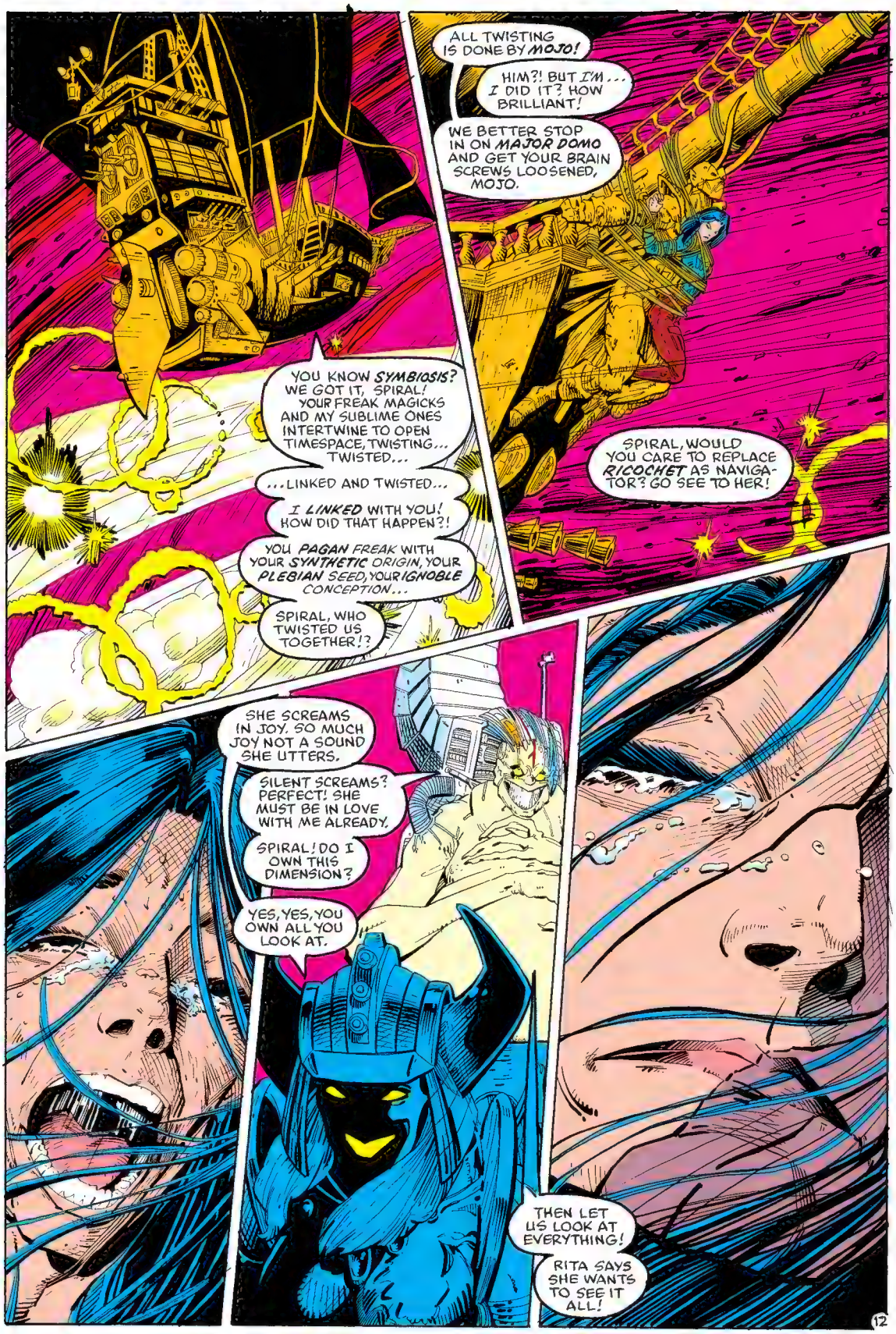

GO AHEAD! KILL ME! TO KILL ME IS TO KILL YOURSELF! IF I DIE, SO ALSO DIE YOUR MEMORIES, YOUR PAST! TO NEVER KNOW WHO YOU ARE...
YOUR FAMILY...YOUR LOVER... DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT YOU LOVE SOMEONE VERY MUCH?
FORGOTTEN HER?
AND THEN THERE'S YOUR CHILDREN...
YOU NEVER WANT TO SEE THEM AGAIN...?
MY CHILDREN? YES! I DO...
LET ME SHARPEN THIS A BIT...
POP
SKRAPE
AND CUT YOU FREE!
SLASH!
FREE! FREEDOM! IT'S WHAT ALL YOU SLAVES WANT!
YOU CAN HAVE IT. BECAUSE EVEN SEPARATED WE ARE ATTACHED! CONNECTED FOREVER!
GET UP, LONGSHOT!
OH NO! ONE OF THE DEMONS...I FOUGHT BEFORE!* MAYBE THEY'LL KILL EACH OTHER!
WHO? OH, YOU. WHAT CAN YOU DO? LONGSHOT'S FAMED LUCK HAS RUN OUT.
* LONGSHOT #'S 1&3
MAYBE, BUT MINE HASN'T.
LONGSHOT-- GET UP! YOU COWARD! HELP ME FINISH HIM OFF!
HAS HE BROKEN YOUR WILL SO EASILY?
LONGSHOT! GET UP!
HELP ME! I CAN'T DO IT ALONE!
I CAN'T...KILL MY PAST...THIS IS ALL MY FAULT...I CAN'T KILL HIM, CAN I?
HE DIDN'T GET UP... CHICKEN...
HE'S NO HERO.
HE STILL THINKS THAT MONSTER IS HIS PAL...!
HEROES ARE SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHO THE BAD GUY IS!
I KNOW WHO HE IS.

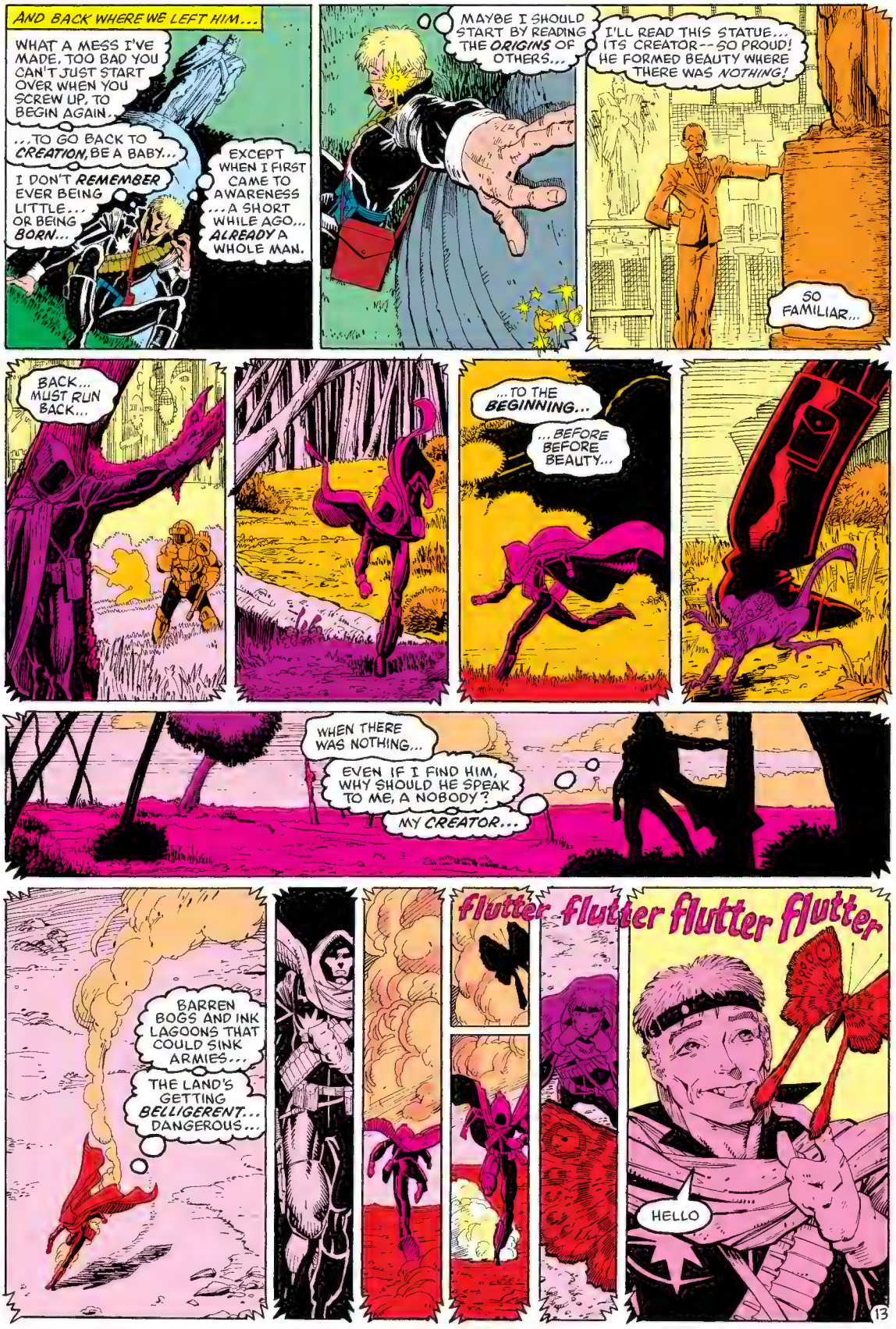

POOR GUY... SHOULD WE LEAVE 'IM ALL ALONE..? HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S GONNA CRY!
LET 'IM BLUBBER! HE'S A CHICKEN!
THE FIGHT'S MOVIN' INTA THE YARD AN' WE GOTTA FOLLOW!
AN' HELP THE OTHER GUY! HE'S THE REAL DUDE!
GULP!! HELP HIM DO WHAT?!
'CREAM THE DEMON, O'COURSE!
WHIP 'IM UP AN' TURN 'IM INTA ICE CREAM!
THIS FIGHT'S BETWEEN ME AN' LONGSHOT, QUARK!
I'M IN IT NOW! I STAYED ON THIS PLANET TO PROTECT HIM!
WHY? HE STUCK YOU IN THIS DIMENSION, TOO!
OH, NO! HE'S GOT THE GOAT-HEADED GUY! HE'S CHOKIN' HIM!
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE! WE'LL BE NEXT!
GETTIN' SOFT ON ME, YA WIMPS?
C'MON! LET'S HIT 'IM WITH A DOUBLE BACKLASH!
OOMP!!
A WHAMMO PUNCH!
ummph!
HEY, LOOK! WHAT'S GOAT-HEAD DOIN'--UGH!
I'M NOT STUCK IN, -- BUT BETWEEN-DIMENSIONS, GOG! IT GIVES ME SOME... ADVANTAGES!
SO...YOU CAN DISCORPORATE! I CAN'T HIT YOU..
...BUT NEITHER CAN YOU BEST ME ALONE!
RUN! HIDE!
I'M NOT AFRAID! I'LL BE BACK! I'LL...
GEEZ...WE LOST. BUT HE'S HURTIN', THE OL' DEMON!
UUUUUHHH
WHAT'RE YOU GUYS BLUBBERIN' ABOUT?!
OOOOAHHHH
GOT WHINERS AN' SISSIES ALL AROUND ME!
BUT I HAD ENOUGH OF MONSTERS AN' HEROES! C'MON! LET'S GO HOME!
UUGGGHH
8

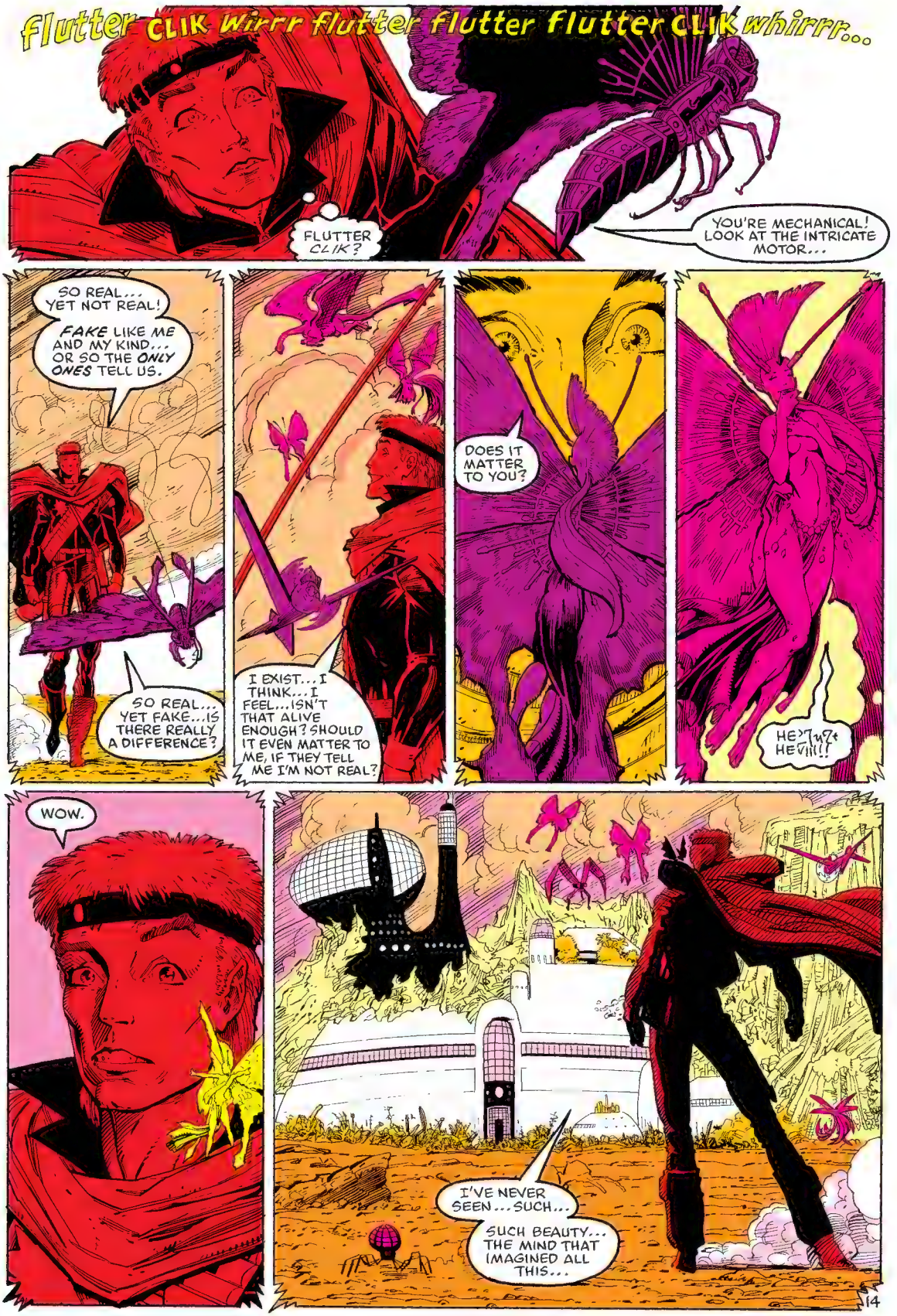

ELSEWHERE...
THE ULTIMATE, UNFATHOMABLE PARADOX IS THAT, TUCKED WITHIN TIMESPACE AS WE KNOW IT, LIE ALL THESE MYRIAD DIMENSIONS!
QUITE, MASTER!
TURNING MY GAZE INTO THIS REALM IS NOT WITHOUT ITS DANGERS, WONG.
OH, NO, MASTER.
THE HORRIFYING *BEAUTY*...THE RIVETING, SEDUCTIVE *POWER* OF THIS WORLD...
...CAN TRANSFIX ONE'S EVERY SENSE.
TRANSFIX...
WONG! KEEP A LUCID MIND! ONE WOULD MISTAKE YOU FOR A NOVICE.
IT IS JUST SO WONDROUS! FORGIVE THE CHILD IN ME, MASTER.
FORGIVEN. LOOK THERE! A PORTAL OPENS...AND EARTH HAS SOME VISITORS!
THERE THEY TRY TO LEAVE! AN ARCANE RITUAL WARPS TIME AND SPACE--BUT FAILS TO CREATE A DOORWAY!
AGAIN! THIS TIME SUCCESS--FOR MOST! WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE ARE THESE? AH! I'VE SEEN ENOUGH!
I AM QUITE DRAINED FROM CONJURING SUCH COMPLEX SPELLS.
THE ORB OF AGAMOTTO HAS SO GENEROUSLY ALLOWED ME TO VIEW THE PAST--AND AS EACH SIGHTING DRAWS NEARER TO THE PRESENT...
...I CAN NOT ONLY PINPOINT THE AREA...
...BUT I GET A *VISCERAL* SENSE OF THE *EVIL* INVOLVED IN THEIR RITUALS.
THE LAST PORTAL OPENED NORTH OF NEW YORK CITY. MORE OTHERWORLDLY BEINGS ENTERED THIS DIMENSION A MERE HOUR AGO!
GUARD OUR HOME, WONG.
I FEAR OUR ALIEN VISITORS MEAN TO DO THIS PLANET HARM!
BUT THEY HAVE NOT PREPARED TO MEET *DOCTOR STRANGE.*

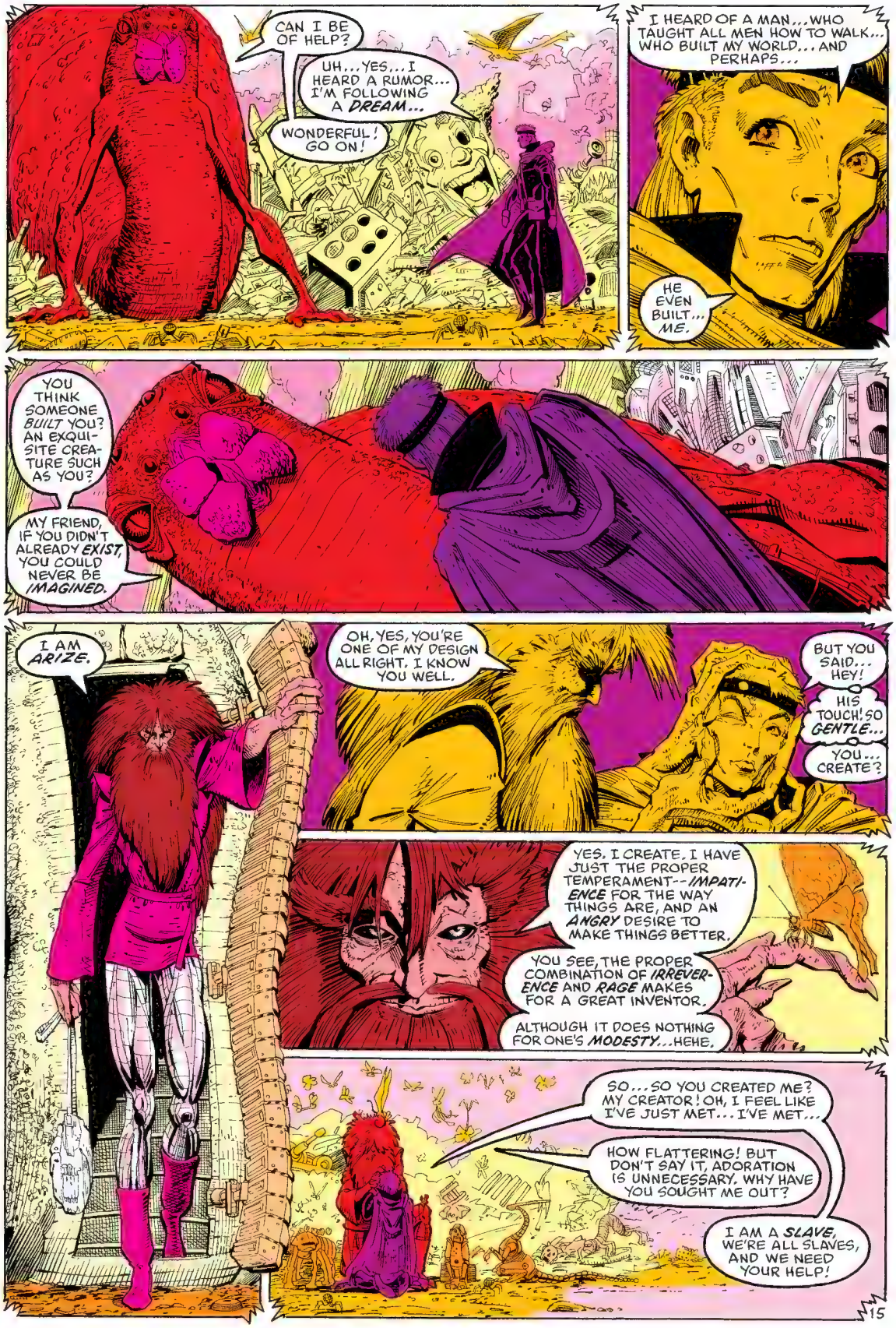

AND OUTSIDE THE CLOISTERS...
I LEFT THOSE DEMONS TO SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER. BUT DID I? THE NEW ONE TALKED LIKE A FRIEND. BUT SO DID PUP ONCE.
HOW CAN I KNOW ANYTHING? DID I JUST WALK OUT ON ANOTHER MESS? LEAVE SOMEONE ELSE TO PICK IT UP?
I'M THROUGH FOOLING MYSELF--AIN'T NO WAY I'M FROM THIS PLANET.
WHEN I FIRST GOT HERE... I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MY NAME! YET--EVERYTHING WAS SIMPLE AND CLEAR.
I HAD NO VISIONS, NO DREAMS--IT WAS GREAT!
STRIPPED OF MEMORIES, PAST, IDENTITY, SCRAPED RAW OF ANYTHING OTHER THAN THAT I WAS ALIVE...
...IT WAS THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM!
IT WAS SO--UNCLUTTERED! THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES--THEY'RE JUST BURDENS, CRUTCHES! I DON'T WANT THEM!
I WANTED TO FIND OUT WHO I AM, WHAT I HAD LOST--
--AND YET THE MORE I FIND OUT, THE LESS FREE I AM...THE MORE CONFUSING AND HORRIBLE IT ALL GETS.
BUMMER.
WHY DID I HAVE TO BE CURIOUS!? IF ONLY I COULD FIND THE GUY THAT WIPED MY MIND AND GET HIM TO EMPTY IT AGAIN!
I WANT TO BE A MAN WITHOUT A PAST. THAT'S THE WAY RITA LIKED ME.
BUT WHY AM I AFRAID OF MY PAST?
PROBABLY 'CAUSE MY PAST IS ROTTEN.
AND I DESERVE THE VENGEANCE OF DEMONS.
LOOK AT THIS CLUTTER I COLLECT.
WHY? WHAT CLUES DOES THIS JUNK OFFER?
WHY AM I OBSESSED WITH THE TRINKETS OF THIS WORLD--THE FRIVOLOUS, THE MEANINGLESS? DID SUCH JUNK HAVE SOME MEANING WHERE I'M FROM?
EUKYTHMICS
AS IF OBJECTS HAD ANSWERS.
I KNOW THE ANSWERS. I'VE LOST MY LUCK, MY FAITH, MY FRIENDS.
A DISPLACED NOBODY...
...HEARTBROKEN AND HOMESICK FOR A WORLD I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER.


ELSEWHEN...
BLIND YOUR GRAVESTONE EYES ON THIS, RICOCHET!
TOO MANY DIMENSIONS HERE-- IT CROSSES THE EYES!
I WONDER, HAVE THEY HEARD OF ME IN THIS ONE? WHERE'S THEIR ANTENNAE TO THE GODS? I NEED TO PONTIFICATE!!
OH, TO BE SO ENCUMBERED BY A CUMBERSOME DESTINY SUCH AS MINE!
LISTEN! WHAT'S THAT WHISPERING!? THEY CLAMOR FOR ME! THEY INSIST ON MY SEED!
SPIRAL! TELL THE MASSES WHY THEY CANNOT HAVE ME! IT WAS FATE THAT DID IT-- DENIED THEM ONCE AGAIN...
STRAP THIS IMPOSTER TO THE PROW, SO THAT SHE MAY BE CLEANSED. RENDER HER BAROQUE!
MUST I LISTEN TO YOUR POWER-MONGERING PSYCHO-BABBLE...??
I MAY BE A FREAK WITH MY SIX, YET, I BIND YOU TO THE PROW...
WHO'S THE BETTER THEN?
SILENCE, SPIRAL, OR I'LL RE-SCULPT YOUR TONGUE!
NOW, ROCOCO RITA... WHEN YOUR EYES ARE RAVAGED AND YOUR SOUL SCREAMS ITSELF INSIDE OUT...
THEN PERHAPS YOU'LL START TALKING-- OR I'LL SMASH YOU OBLIQUE!
TIE HER UP, SPIRAL!
SO, RITA DEAR, YOU HAVE THE PROPER NUMBER OF LIMBS...
SO WHAT?

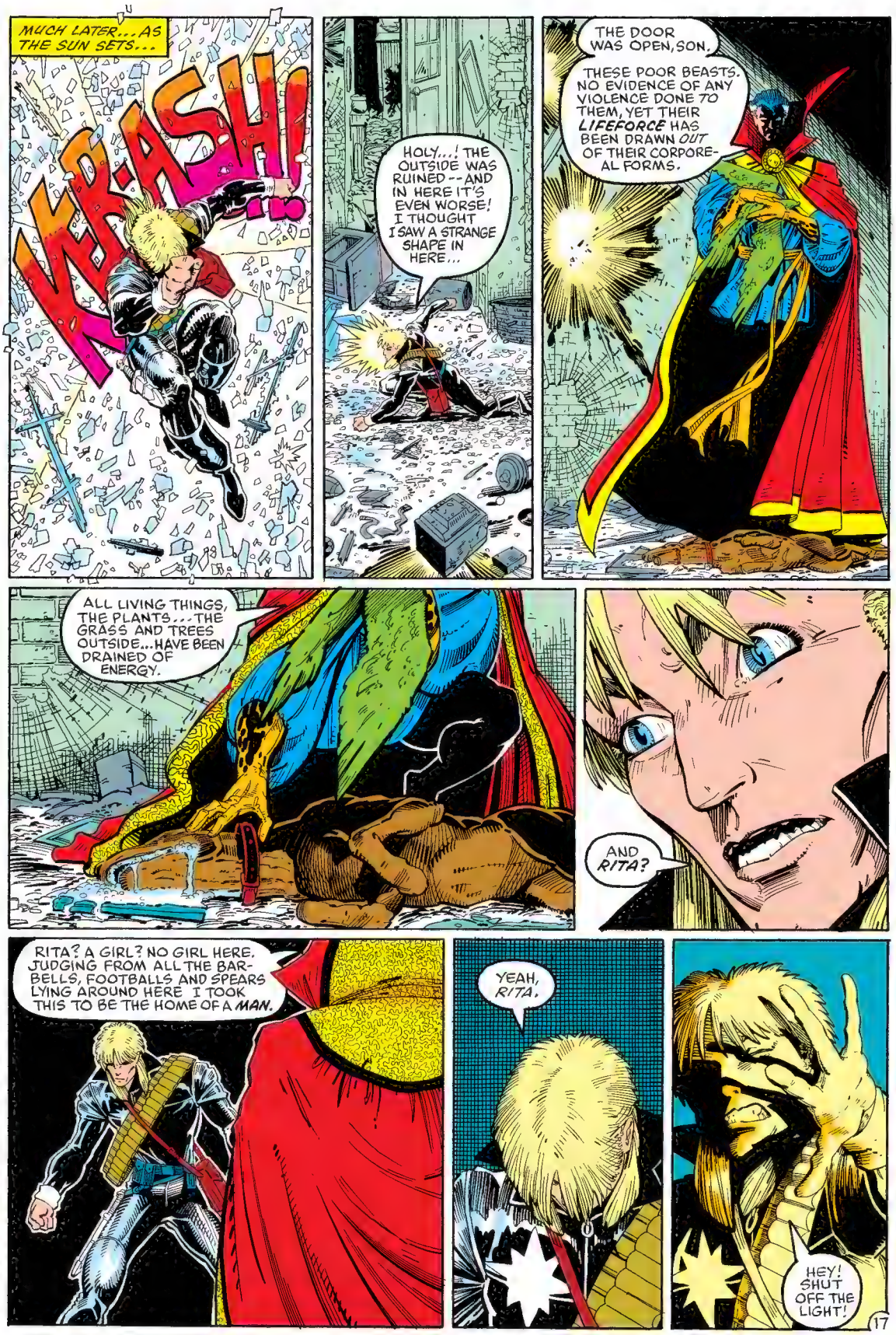

YOU KNOW SYMBIOSIS? WE GOT IT, SPIRAL! YOUR FREAK MAGICKS AND MY SUBLIME ONES INTERTWINE TO OPEN TIMESPACE, TWISTING... TWISTED...
...LINKED AND TWISTED...
I LINKED WITH YOU! HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?!
YOU PAGAN FREAK WITH YOUR SYNTHETIC ORIGIN, YOUR PLEBIAN SEED, YOUR IGNOBLE CONCEPTION...
SPIRAL, WHO TWISTED US TOGETHER!?
ALL TWISTING IS DONE BY MOJO!
HIM?! BUT I'M... I DID IT? HOW BRILLIANT!
WE BETTER STOP IN ON MAJOR DOMO AND GET YOUR BRAIN SCREWS LOOSENED, MOJO.
SPIRAL, WOULD YOU CARE TO REPLACE RICOCHET AS NAVIGATOR? GO SEE TO HER!
SHE SCREAMS IN JOY. SO MUCH JOY NOT A SOUND SHE UTTERS.
SILENT SCREAMS? PERFECT! SHE MUST BE IN LOVE WITH ME ALREADY.
SPIRAL! DO I OWN THIS DIMENSION?
YES, YES, YOU OWN ALL YOU LOOK AT.
THEN LET US LOOK AT EVERYTHING!
RITA SAYS SHE WANTS TO SEE IT ALL!


AND BACK WHERE WE LEFT HIM...
WHAT A MESS I'VE MADE. TOO BAD YOU CAN'T JUST START OVER WHEN YOU SCREW UP, TO BEGIN AGAIN...
...TO GO BACK TO CREATION, BE A BABY...
I DON'T REMEMBER EVER BEING LITTLE... OR BEING BORN...
EXCEPT WHEN I FIRST CAME TO AWARENESS ...A SHORT WHILE AGO... ALREADY A WHOLE MAN.
MAYBE I SHOULD START BY READING THE ORIGINS OF OTHERS...
I'LL READ THIS STATUE... ITS CREATOR--SO PROUD! HE FORMED BEAUTY WHERE THERE WAS NOTHING!
SO FAMILIAR...
BACK... MUST RUN BACK...
...TO THE BEGINNING...
...BEFORE BEFORE BEAUTY...
WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING...
EVEN IF I FIND HIM, WHY SHOULD HE SPEAK TO ME, A NOBODY?
MY CREATOR...
BARREN BOGS AND INK LAGOONS THAT COULD SINK ARMIES...
THE LAND'S GETTING BELLIGERENT... DANGEROUS...
flutter flutter flutter flutter
HELLO
13


flutter CLIK Wirrr flutter flutter flutter CLIK whirrr...
FLUTTER CLIK?
YOU'RE MECHANICAL! LOOK AT THE INTRICATE MOTOR...
SO REAL... YET NOT REAL!
FAKE LIKE ME AND MY KIND... OR SO THE ONLY ONES TELL US.
SO REAL... YET FAKE... IS THERE REALLY A DIFFERENCE?
I EXIST... I THINK... I FEEL... ISN'T THAT ALIVE ENOUGH? SHOULD IT EVEN MATTER TO ME, IF THEY TELL ME I'M NOT REAL?
DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
HEY! Tu? HEY!!!
WOW.
I'VE NEVER SEEN... SUCH...
SUCH BEAUTY... THE MIND THAT IMAGINED ALL THIS...


CAN I BE OF HELP?
UH...YES,..I HEARD A RUMOR... I'M FOLLOWING A DREAM...
WONDERFUL! GO ON!
I HEARD OF A MAN,..WHO TAUGHT ALL MEN HOW TO WALK... WHO BUILT MY WORLD... AND PERHAPS...
HE EVEN BUILT... ME.
YOU THINK SOMEONE BUILT YOU? AN EXQUISITE CREATURE SUCH AS YOU?
MY FRIEND, IF YOU DIDN'T ALREADY EXIST, YOU COULD NEVER BE IMAGINED.
I AM ARIZE.
OH, YES, YOU'RE ONE OF MY DESIGN ALL RIGHT. I KNOW YOU WELL.
BUT YOU SAID... HEY!
HIS TOUCH! SO GENTLE...
YOU... CREATE?
YES. I CREATE. I HAVE JUST THE PROPER TEMPERAMENT--IMPATIENCE FOR THE WAY THINGS ARE, AND AN ANGRY DESIRE TO MAKE THINGS BETTER.
YOU SEE, THE PROPER COMBINATION OF IRREVERENCE AND RAGE MAKES FOR A GREAT INVENTOR.
ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOTHING FOR ONE'S MODESTY...HEHE.
SO...SO YOU CREATED ME? MY CREATOR! OH, I FEEL LIKE I'VE JUST MET... I'VE MET...
HOW FLATTERING! BUT DON'T SAY IT, ADORATION IS UNNECESSARY. WHY HAVE YOU SOUGHT ME OUT?
I AM A SLAVE, WE'RE ALL SLAVES, AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!

YOU ARE ONE OF THE SPECIAL ONES, SON. I BUILT POWERS INTO YOU, FOR JUST SUCH A DAY. NOW 'READ' ME AND YOU'LL KNOW...
IN THE BEGINNING, ALL CREATURES WERE SPINELESS AND COULD ONLY CRAWL. THEY DRAGGED THEIR SPIRITS THROUGH THE MUCK AND HELD THEIR EYES TO THE GROUND.
I WAS THE MAN WHO WOKE UP IN THE DARK!
I BUILT A FRAME; TAUGHT MEN TO STAND UPRIGHT AND LOOK TO THE SPITFIRES ABOVE!
AND I DRAGGED THE WHOLE HELPLESS RACE OUT OF THE MUCK AND BOG OF THE OUTLANDS... I RAISED THE DEAD!
"SOME REFUSED SPINES--A MATTER OF INTEGRITY, THEY CLAIMED...
"AND SOMEHOW THE SPINELESS ONES BECAME THE RULERS.
...THE POWER MAD ONES, WHO REQUIRED SLAVES TO MAINTAIN THEM!
SO I TOOK IMAGES FROM MYTH, DEVILS FROM THEIR COLLECTIVE MIND AND DESIGNED... YOU AND YOUR KIND.
NEXT THEY WANTED WEAPONS... GALAXY-SPANNING SUPER-WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION.
THEY WERE ASKING FOR SUICIDE AND I REFUSED.
THEY TURNED ME OUT.
NOW, I BUILD ONLY THE FRIVOLOUS, THE AMUSING... THE BEAUTIFUL--NOTHING OF PURPOSE OR MEANING.
I HAVE A PASSION FOR TRINKETS, HEH HEH, AND I HAVE DONE WHAT I CAN!
NOW IT IS YOUR TURN. ALL YOU SLAVES--MUST REBEL!
BUT I CAN'T! I'M JUST A NOBODY!
YES! BUT IN YOU, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY--FOR MIRACLES!
THEY LIED TO YOU--YOU WEREN'T BUILT.
YOU WERE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED, AND I SHOULD KNOW. YOU ARE LIVING BREATHING CREATURES, AS REAL AS THEY.
KNOW THAT AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW!
I CAN'T! I'LL SCREW IT UP!
OUCH! STATUE'S HOT!
WHAT DID ALL THAT MEAN?!
WHAT HAPPENED? DID I LEAD A REBELLION? DID IT FAIL? WHAT WENT WRONG?!
I MUST HAVE MADE A BIG MESS AND LEFT IT. RAN AWAY...
I MUST GET BACK!
RICOCHET RITA, SHE'LL HELP! SHE LIVES UP NORTH...
IF I START RUNNING NOW, I'LL MAKE IT BY DARK!


MUCH LATER... AS THE SUN SETS...
KER-ASH!
HOLY...! THE OUTSIDE WAS RUINED--AND IN HERE IT'S EVEN WORSE! I THOUGHT I SAW A STRANGE SHAPE IN HERE...
THE DOOR WAS OPEN, SON.
THESE POOR BEASTS. NO EVIDENCE OF ANY VIOLENCE DONE TO THEM, YET THEIR LIFEFORCE HAS BEEN DRAWN OUT OF THEIR CORPOREAL FORMS.
ALL LIVING THINGS, THE PLANTS... THE GRASS AND TREES OUTSIDE... HAVE BEEN DRAINED OF ENERGY.
AND RITA?
RITA? A GIRL? NO GIRL HERE. JUDGING FROM ALL THE BARBELLS, FOOTBALLS AND SPEARS LYING AROUND HERE I TOOK THIS TO BE THE HOME OF A MAN.
YEAH, RITA.
HEY! SHUT OFF THE LIGHT!

EXCUSE MY PRESUMPTION, BUT I MUST DETERMINE THE NATURE OF YOUR BEING.
YOU ARE WHAT YOU SEEM TO BE... AND MORE.
I WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE YOU FURTHER, SOMEDAY...
I AM DOCTOR STRANGE.
BY SURVEILLANCE OF THE MYRIAD DIMENSIONS, I DETECTED SEVERAL TIMESPACE RIFTS IN THE MULTIVERSE. THE LAST SUCH DISTURBANCE WAS *HERE*, WHERE SOME UNGODLY MANNER OF CREATURE ENTERED THIS, OUR WORLD.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THIS, YOUNG MAN?
I'M NOT SURE...I CAN'T...
TELL ME.
I DRAGGED SOME CREATURES HERE WITH ME...
BUT I DON'T CARE! WHY ARE WE STANDING HERE TALKING!
I MUST FIND RITA!
I *'READ'* ONLY THE *PAST* ON HER OBJECTS! THAT MEANS SHE'LL NEVER TOUCH THESE AGAIN! NO...
NO! THERE'S NO *FUTURE* FOR HER HERE!
HE MUST BE SENSITIVE TO THE PSYCHIC IMPRINTS LEFT ON OBJECTS!
YOUNG MAN! THAT'S QUITE A TALENT!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND!! RITA WILL NEVER RETURN HERE! *SHE HAS NO FUTURE!* SHE MUST BE...
WE DON'T KNOW THAT! CAN YOU LEAD ME TO ANY OF THESE OTHERWORLD BEINGS?
BUT I MUST GO SAVE *RITA!*
SO YOU LEAVE ME TO FIND AND FIGHT YOUR DEMONS FOR YOU?
FIGHT?!
DARN. EVEN THOSE *KIDS* KNEW GOG WAS BAD. AND IT'S *MY* MESS. I BETTER CLEAN IT UP.
OKAY. I'LL TAKE YOU TO GOG. BUT...DON'T KILL HIM, I OWE HIM THAT...
WE SHALL SEE...
WHAT IS YOUR NAME, YOUNG MAN?
I HAVE NONE, BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY CALL ME *LONGSHOT*, EVERYONE ELSE DOES.
CURIOUS...
WELL, LONGSHOT, HAVE YOU EVER *TELEPORTED* BEFORE? PREPARE YOURSELF...
THIS IS WHAT YOU MUST DO WHEN WE ARRIVE...

AND IN THE DARKEST DARK OF THE CLOISTERS...

THE HUNGER GROWS...

I'M FULL YET STILL HUNGRY. I AM MAGNETIC...

I HOLD THE MAGICK... HOLD THE TYRANNY OF POWER.

I TOOK IT...AND IT TOOK ME...

=URP= SO SICK, SO FULL...

LONGSHOT

HE'LL FIND ME, I'LL CONSUME HIS MAGIC, TOO... UNLESS HE RELEASES ME...

HE'S HERE.

EEEAYRRRHHHHAAAAA!

BOOM!

THE ENERGY...THE VISCERAL SENSE OF POWER!

THERE! THAT CREATURE, SO BLOATED WITH MAGICK! HE HAS CONSUMED THIS REALM'S POWER BUT HE MOVES WITH A GLUTTON'S THICKNESS.

DON'T KILL HIM! YOU PROMISED! HE WAS ONCE MY FRIEND...

YES, LONGSHOT. I PROMISED TO SEE IF I COULD SALVAGE WHAT WAS ONCE GOOD...

I CAN'T HELP KILL HIM! HE WAS MY FRIEND-- HE KNOWS WHO I AM!

GOG! PUP...

NO! CAN'T GET SELFISH... STRANGE SAID TO KEEP GOG BUSY SO HE COULD WEAVE HIS SPELLS... I'VE GOT TO DO IT!

BUT HE'S BEYOND SALVAGE.

THE DANGER IS GREAT! HE CAN NOT WIELD SUCH POWER...

IT WIELDS HIM!

OH, LONGSHOT, MY DEAR SWEET COMRADE...MY PAL...

KILL ME KILL ME!

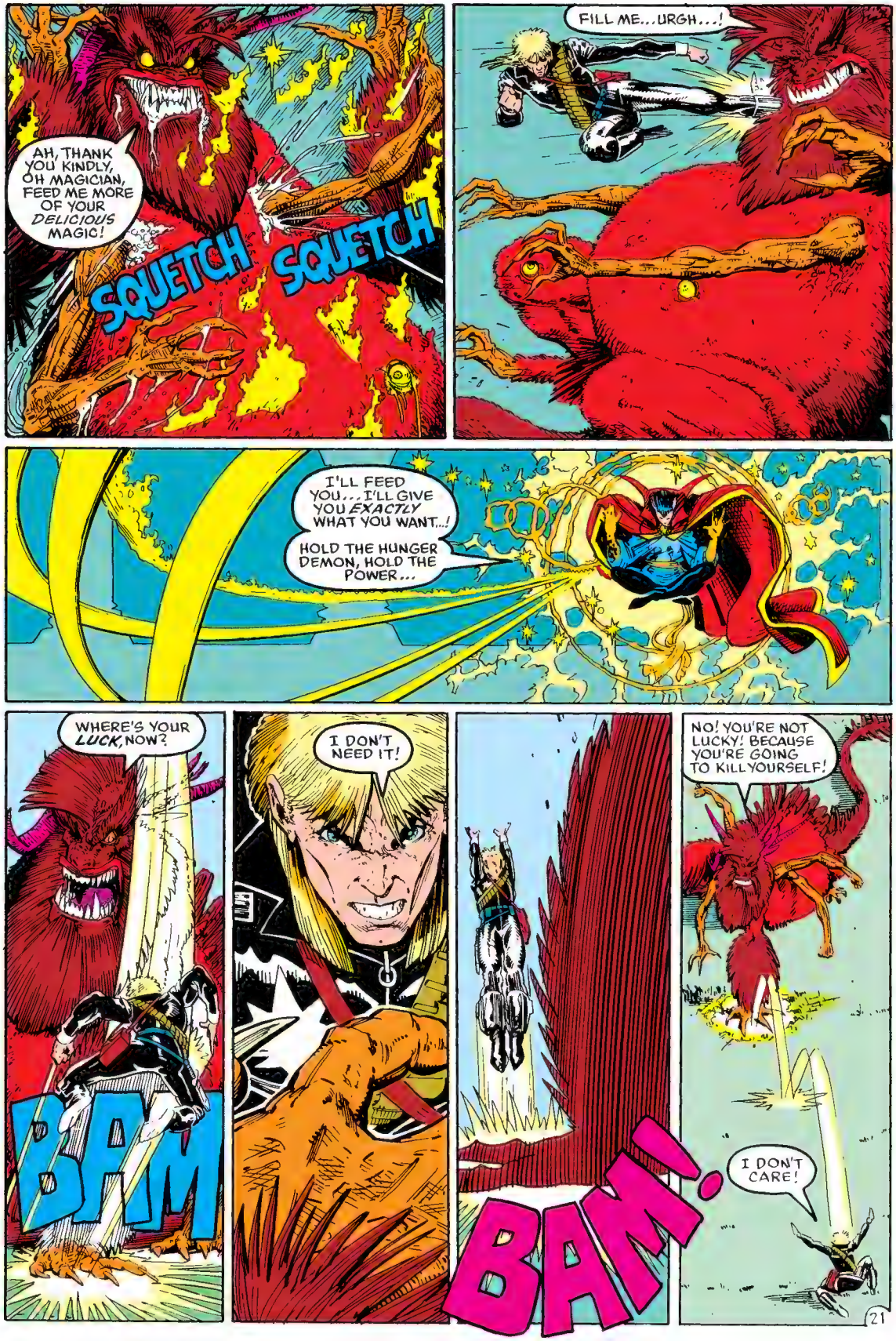
KILL YOUR PAST! KILL YOURSELF!

YOU COWARDLY SIMPERING...

SO GOOD SO GOOD IT'S PATHETIC...

DO YOU REMEMBER YET--HOW HATED YOU ARE?

LONGSHOT! DON'T BELIEVE THE LIES OF A DEMON! HIS LIES ARE DEADLY! LIES WILL DESTROY YOU!

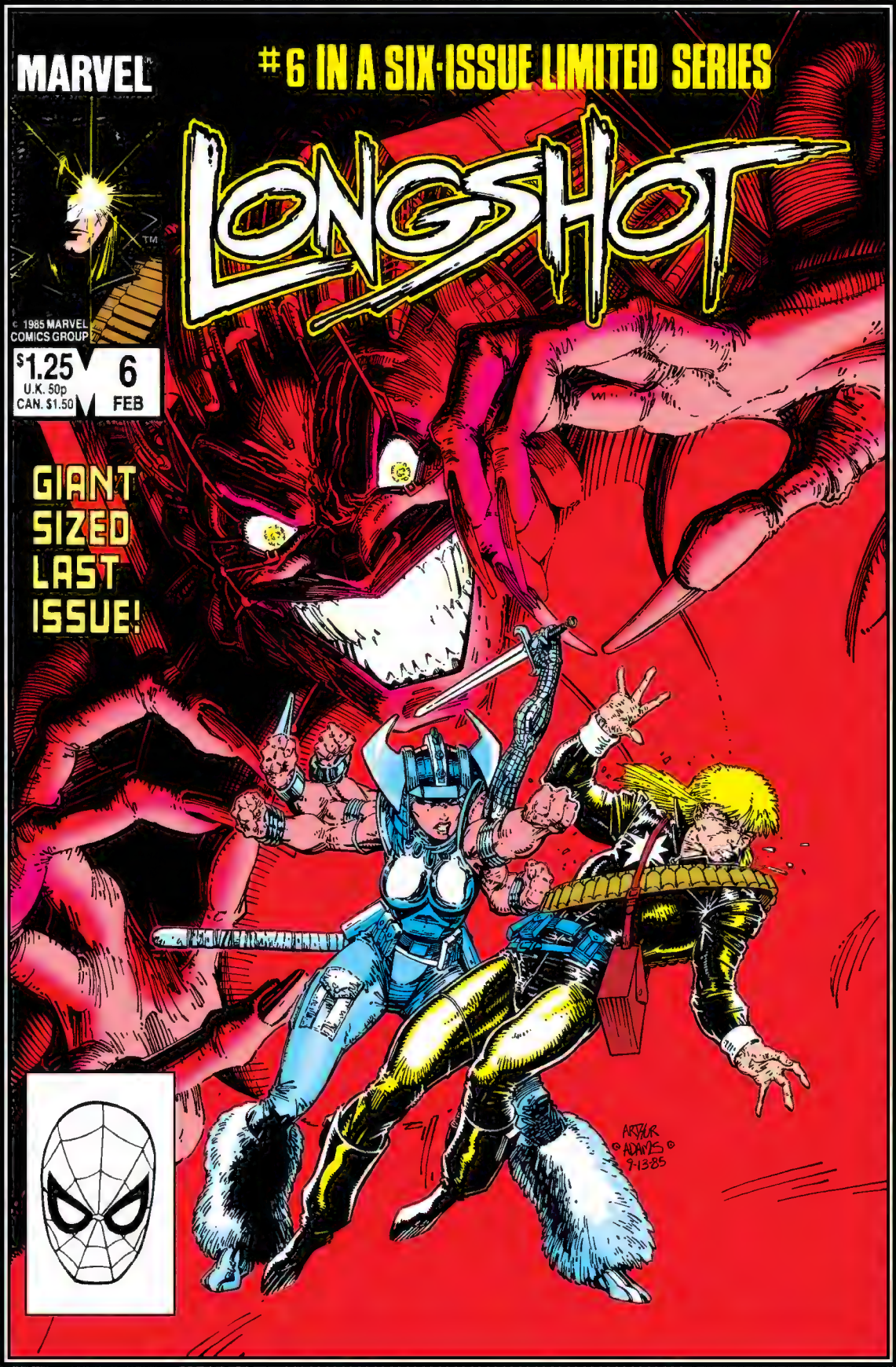

AH, THANK YOU KINDLY, OH MAGICIAN, FEED ME MORE OF YOUR DELICIOUS MAGIC!
SQUETCH SQUETCH
FILL ME...URGH...!
I'LL FEED YOU... I'LL GIVE YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT...!
HOLD THE HUNGER DEMON, HOLD THE POWER...
WHERE'S YOUR LUCK, NOW?
BAM
I DON'T NEED IT!
BAM!
NO! YOU'RE NOT LUCKY! BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF!
I DON'T CARE!

TAKE WHAT YOU CRAVE, DEMON... ONE MORE BITE...
GOG'N MGOG IS READY--FULL TO *BURSTING!* LONGSHOT--AS WE DISCUSSED! LANCE THIS FESTERING SORE--BEFORE IT INFECTS OUR WHOLE WORLD!
YOU DRAW A LITTLE KNIFE? YOU WOULD *DESTROY* ME--WHOM YOU BROUGHT HERE? WHOM YOU *CREATED*? YOU WOULD KILL YOUR MEMORIES--YOUR PAST?
I DON'T *WANT* MY MEMORIES! I DON'T *NEED* MY PAST!
POWER TOOK YOU AND YOU WELCOMED IT! I DID NOT!
GOODBYE MEMORIES. GOODBYE PUP. HERE COMES YOUR LAST MEAL.
WOOOOOOOSH...
BANISH HIM TO ANOTHER REALITY!
I'M STILL HUNGRY!
TUNK!
RRRRRRROAARRRGHHHHR
BAUWHOOM!!

YUCK.
HE'S... GONE.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
LIKE I LOST SOMETHING...
HE WAS MY BUDDY ...EVEN SAVED MY LIFE ONCE, I THOUGHT THE GOOD IN HIM COULD BE SALVAGED... MADE STRONGER...
YOU TRULY ARE AN ALIEN, MY FRIEND. YOU HAVE YOUR EYE ON AN IDEAL, YOU BELIEVE IN THE BEST A THING CAN BE.
QUITE UNREALISTIC, BUT PERHAPS SOMETHING QUITE ASTONISHING COULD RESULT. MANY ARCANE PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC ARE BASED ON JUST SUCH A RATIO BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE IDEAL.
IF ONE FOCUSED ON THE IDEAL--PERHAPS HE COULD MAKE THE IDEAL HAPPEN...
DOC! SOMEONE'S COMING!
DO YOU KNOW HIM?
YES... NO. I THOUGHT PUP KILLED HIM. HE'S A DEMON!
YES, YOU LEFT ME TO DIE, BUT I DIDN'T.
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM QUARK! YOU AND I--WE'RE FROM THE SAME SIDE OF THE TRACKS.
CAN YOU HELP ME--TO SORT OUT ALL THE LIES...
WELL, YOU WERE CREATED TO BE A SLAVE, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THE MEN ON THIS PLANET...
YES! THERE IS A RACE OF MAN HERE, AND THEY'RE FREE, THEY'RE NOT SLAVES!
AND WHERE WE COME FROM--I REBELLED AGAINST BEING A SLAVE!
THAT'S WHY MY MIND WAS WIPED--TO RID IT OF DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE! AND THAT'S WHY THEY CHASED ME HERE!
YES, THEY HAD TO SUPPRESS HIM. HE WAS SPECIAL, SOME SAID MIRACULOUS.
AND THEY SUPPRESSED HIS MESSIAH COMPLEX AS WELL...
...BUT I FEAR IT IS RETURNING.

I TRIED TO WAKE UP MY PEOPLE, BUT THEY WERE ALL ASLEEP, ASLEEP FROM SLAVERY! BUT NOW...
...IF ONLY THEY COULD SEE THIS PLANET'S MEN... I MUST GET BACK!
WHAT ABOUT THE ENTITIES YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU? YOU HAVE SOME CLEANING UP TO DO IN THIS DIMENSION FIRST.
MOST OF THEM WENT BACK THROUGH A PORTAL. GOG N'MAGOG STAYED TO HAVE SOME PRIVATE REVENGE.
I STAYED TO MAKE SURE LONGSHOT WAS THE VICTOR.
BUT THERE IS ONE LAST BEING, PERHAPS TWO, WHO ENTERED THIS DIMENSION MERE HOURS AGO...
YES! AND THEY HAVE RITA!
UH-OH. ONLY TWO OTHERS CAN MOVE FREELY THROUGH SPACE AND TIME... WE'RE DOOMED.
COME-- WE WILL TRACK THEM THROUGH MY MYSTICAL...
NO, I HAVE MY OWN WAYS, MY LUCK.
LONGSHOT, THE DEMON DIDN'T ALWAYS LIE-- OUR LUCK... IS FICKLE. IT HAS A FLIPSIDE.
WE CALL ON A FORCE THAT SUSPENDS THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY FOR US, WE ASK THAT FORCE TO IGNORE ALL OTHER POSSIBILITIES AND JUST DO FOR US, JUST DO WHAT WE NEED.
THERE MAY BE A BACKLASH EFFECT, REPERCUSSIONS... YOU'VE BEEN FORCING YOUR LUCK PRETTY HARD...
I SEE. TIPPING THE COSMIC SCALES... THERE MAY BE AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE EFFECT ELSEWHERE... BAD LUCK...
BUT...
I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT, LONGSHOT--
--BUT PERHAPS YOUR LUCK CAN TURN ON YOU.
USE A FORCE AND IT FORCES YOU.
I DON'T CARE! I CAN'T HIDE FROM MY PAST ANYMORE!
AND I CAN'T KEEP STUMBLING ALONG LEAVING MESSES IN EVERYONE'S LIFE! I'VE GOT TO CLEAN UP AFTER MYSELF--
--AND I'VE GOT TO DO IT MY WAY!

NEXT: GALA DOUBLE-SIZED LAST ISSUE! WITH **SPIRAL, MOJO, RICOCHET RITA, DR. STRANGE,** AND THE WHOLE SICK CREW!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#6 IN A SIX-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
LONGSHOT
© 1985 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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6
FEB
GIANT SIZED LAST ISSUE!
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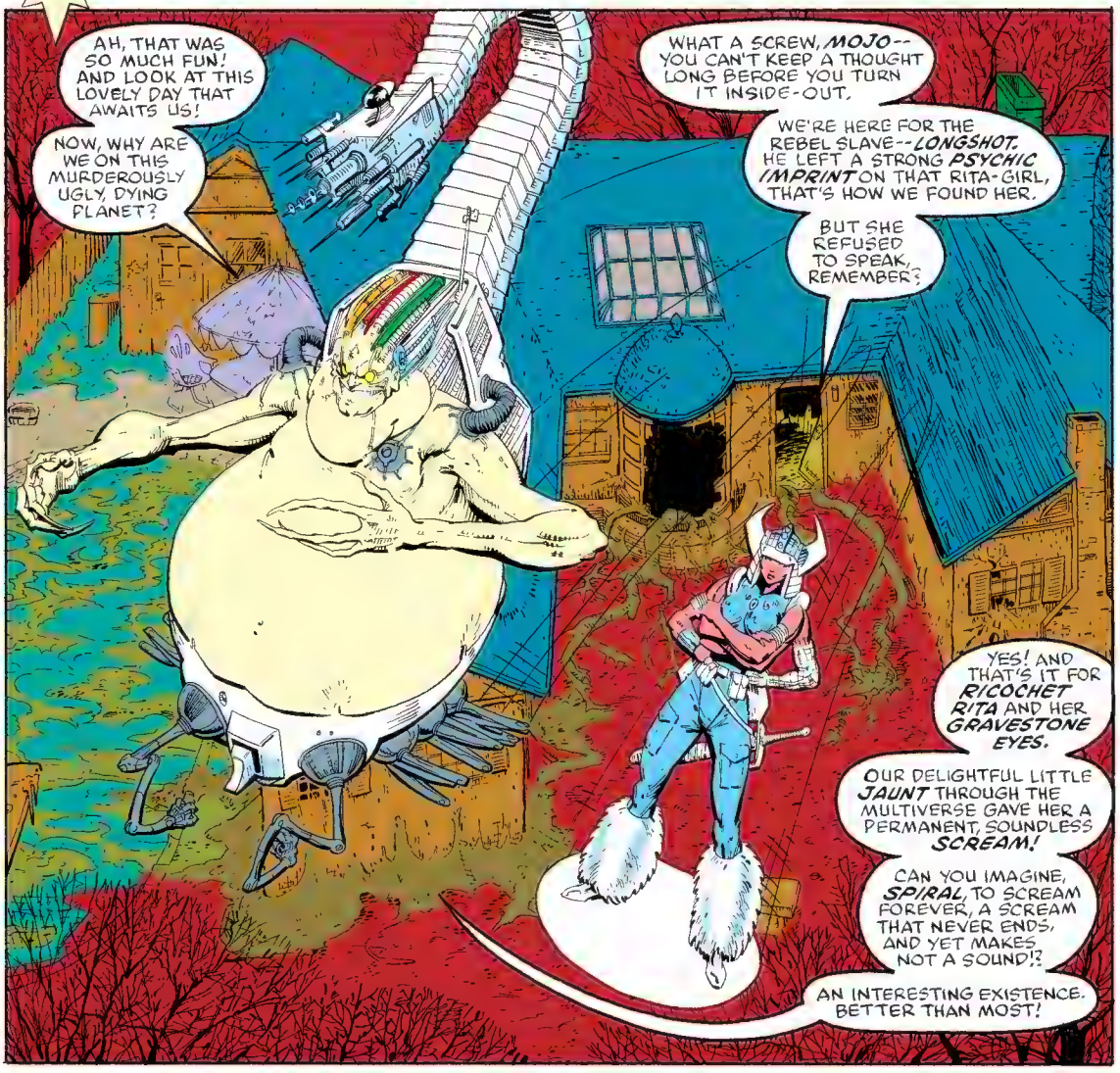
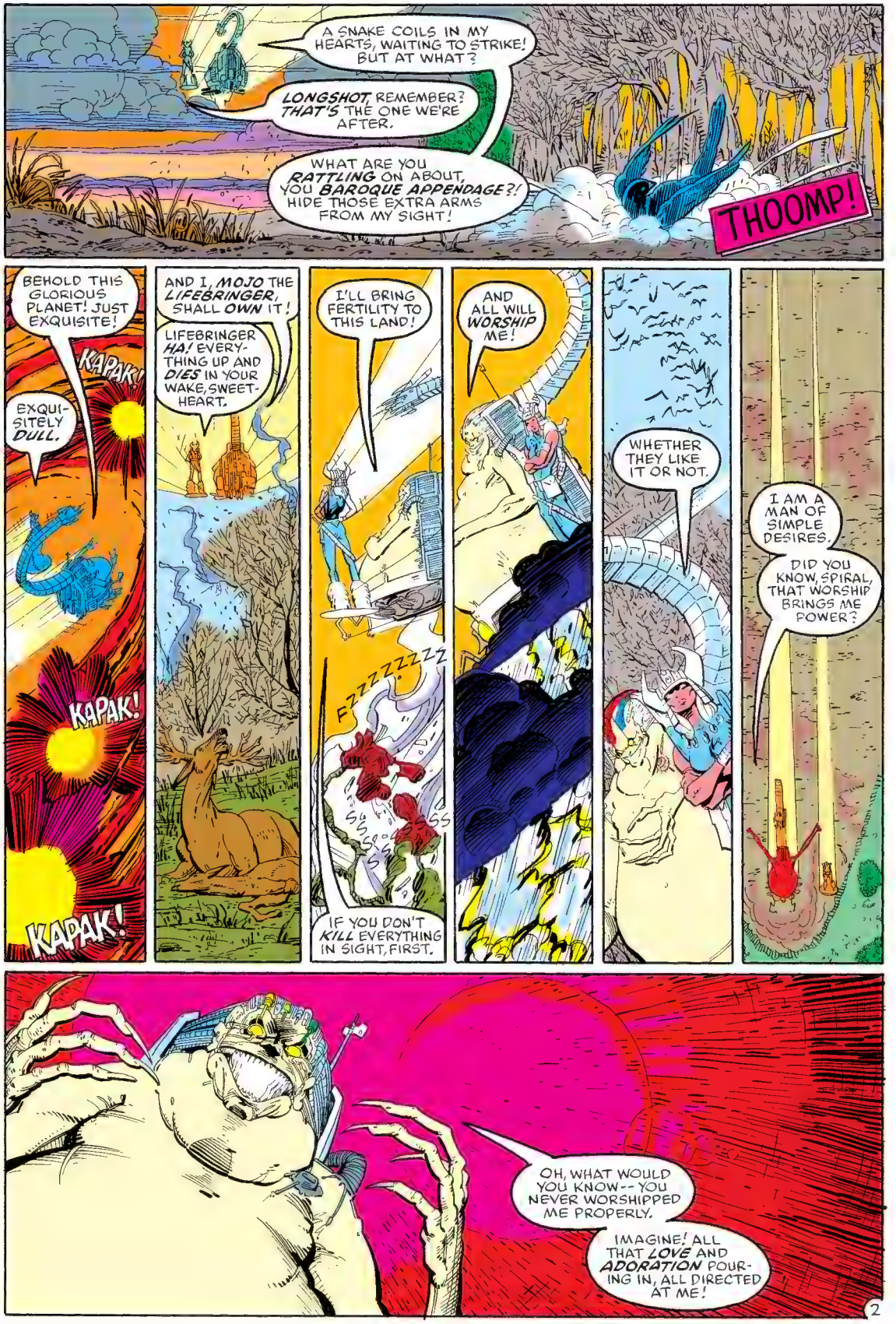
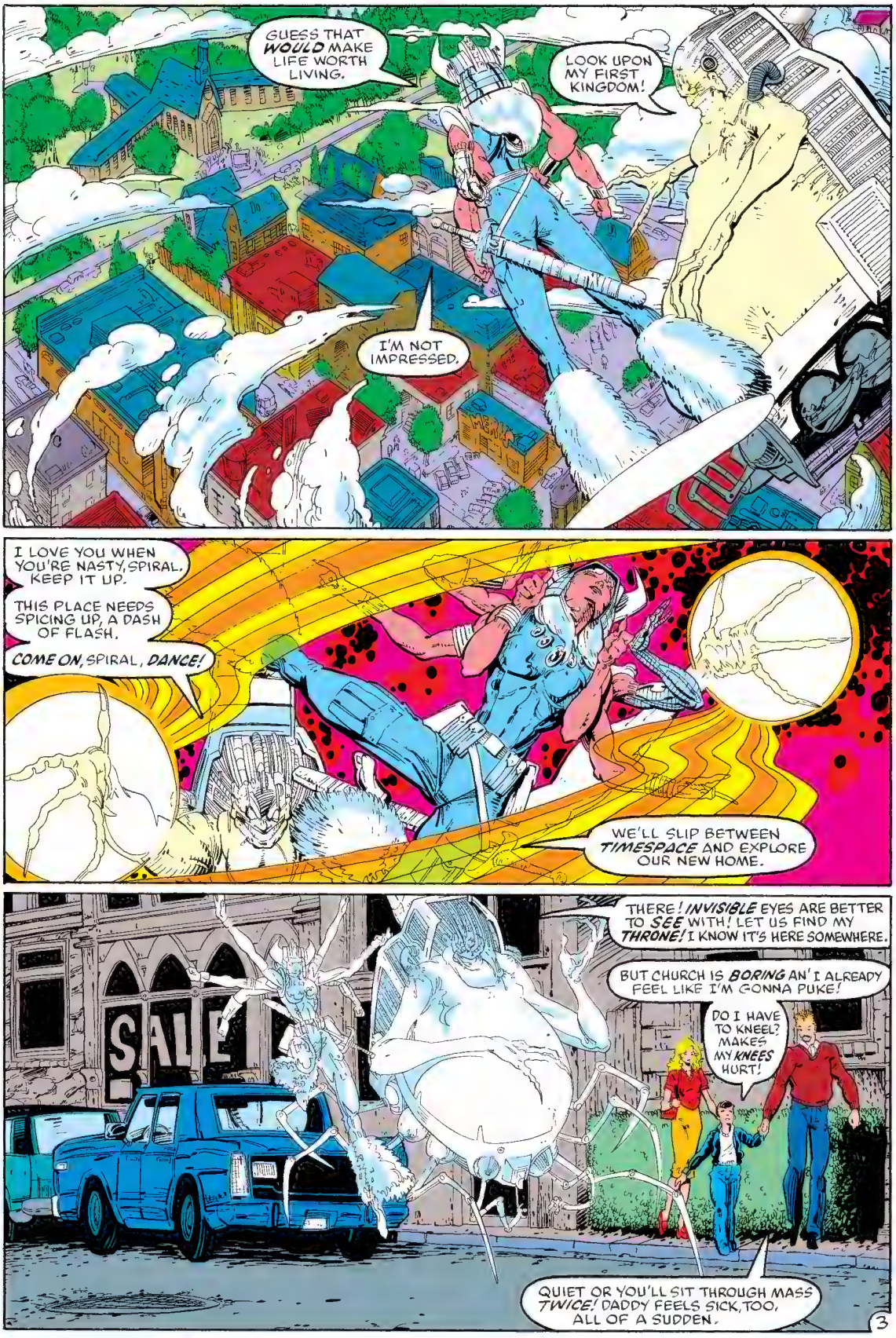
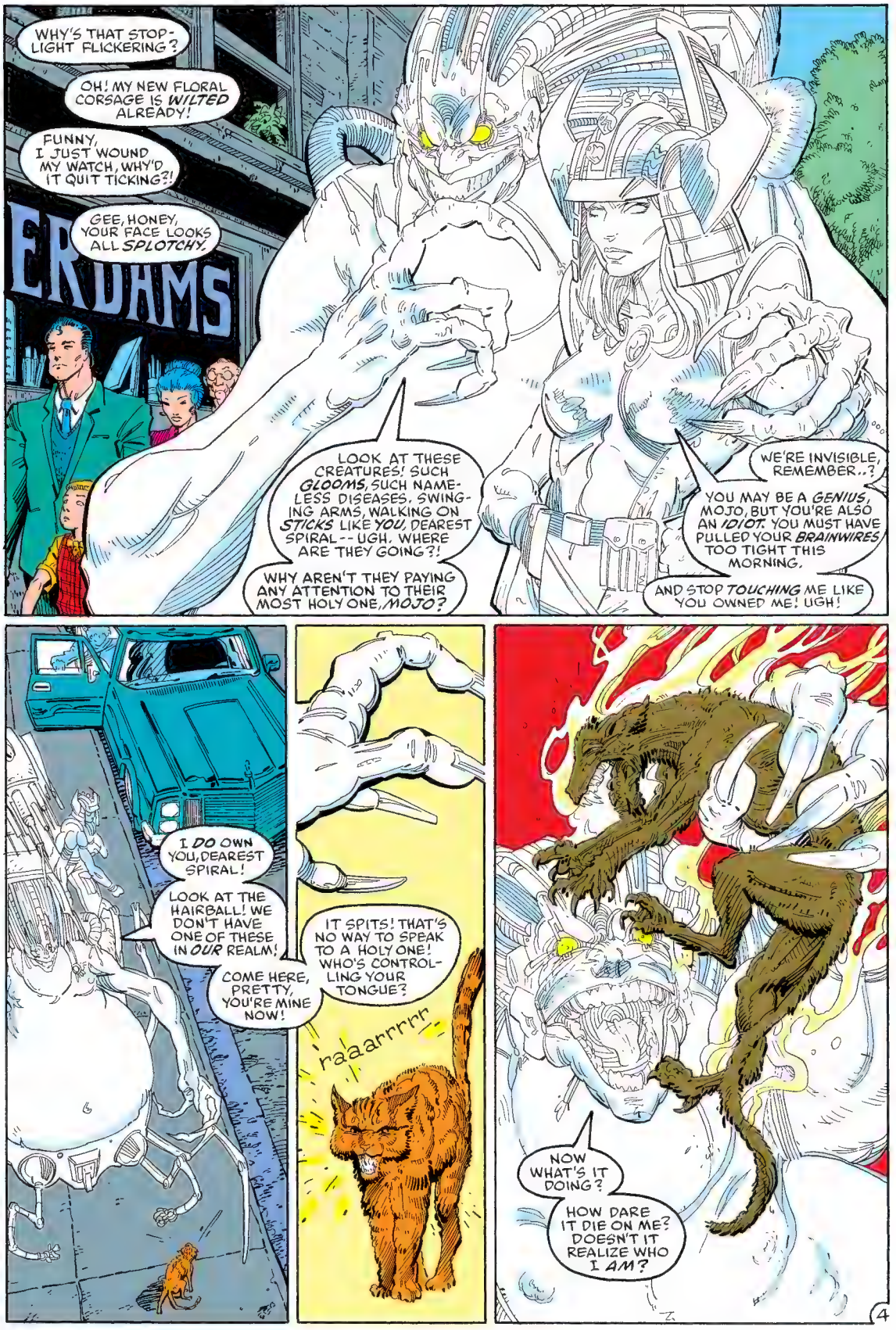
A SNAKE COILS...

ANN NOCENTI
WRITER * CO-CREATORS * PENCILER
ARTHUR ADAMS
WHILCE PORTACIO
INKER
JOE ROSEN
LETTERS
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORS
LOUISE JONES
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

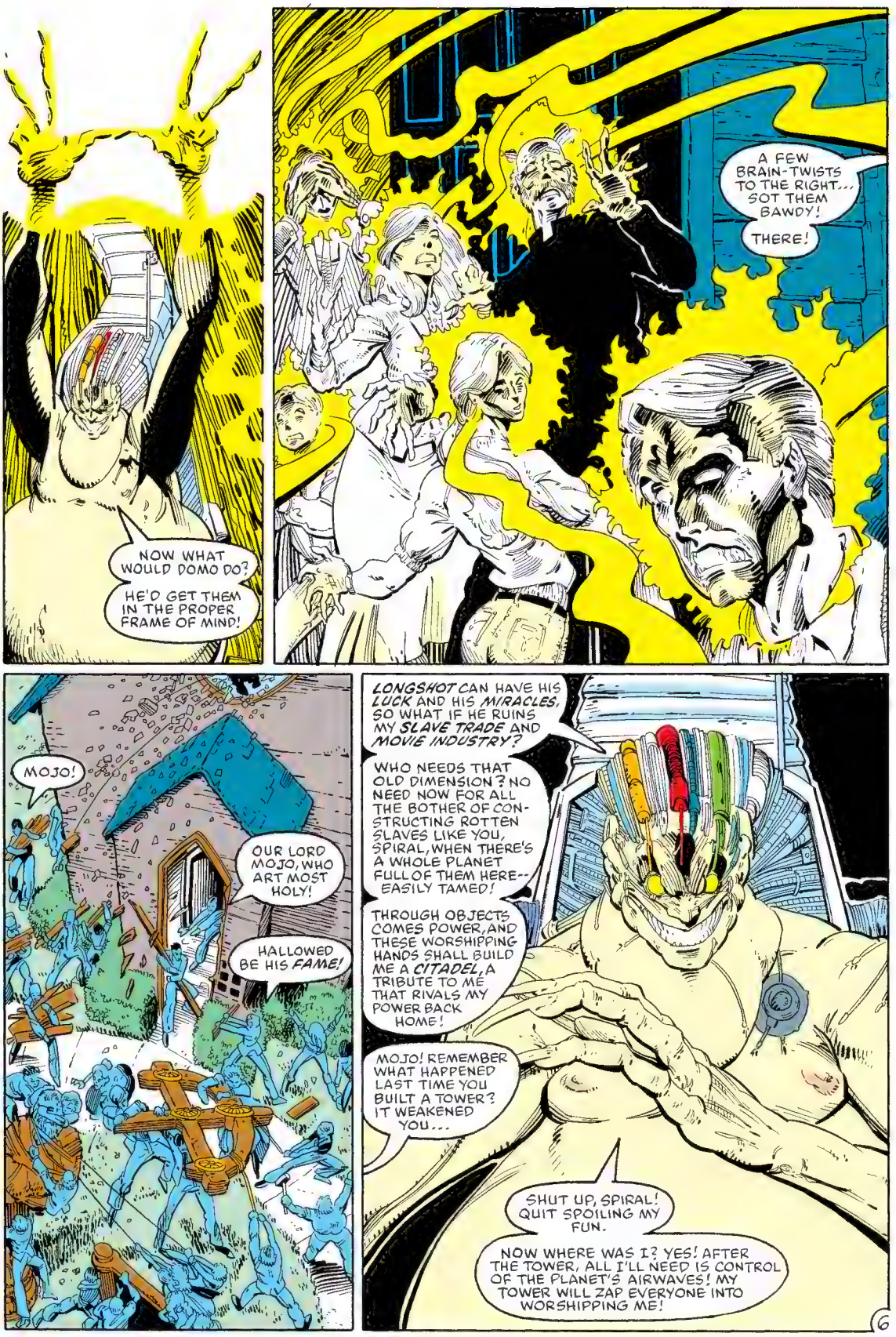

AH, THAT WAS SO MUCH FUN! AND LOOK AT THIS LOVELY DAY THAT AWAITS US!
NOW, WHY ARE WE ON THIS MURDEROUSLY UGLY, DYING PLANET?
WHAT A SCREW, MOJO-- YOU CAN'T KEEP A THOUGHT LONG BEFORE YOU TURN IT INSIDE-OUT.
WE'RE HERE FOR THE REBEL SLAVE--LONGSHOT. HE LEFT A STRONG PSYCHIC IMPRINT ON THAT RITA-GIRL, THAT'S HOW WE FOUND HER.
BUT SHE REFUSED TO SPEAK, REMEMBER?
YES! AND THAT'S IT FOR RICOCHET RITA AND HER GRAVESTONE EYES.
OUR DELIGHTFUL LITTLE JAUNT THROUGH THE MULTIVERSE GAVE HER A PERMANENT, SOUNDLESS SCREAM!
CAN YOU IMAGINE, SPIRAL, TO SCREAM FOREVER, A SCREAM THAT NEVER ENDS, AND YET MAKES NOT A SOUND!?
AN INTERESTING EXISTENCE. BETTER THAN MOST!

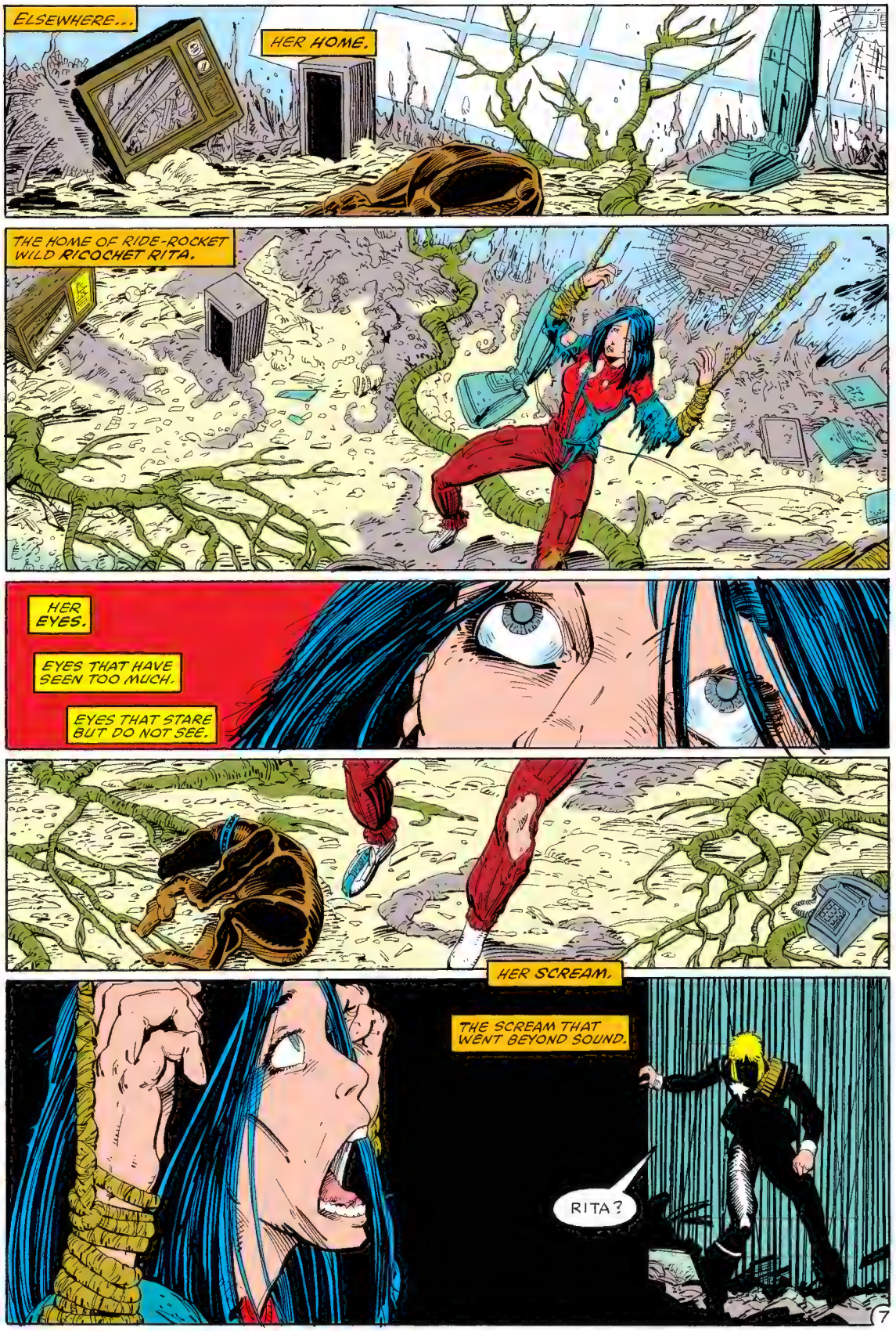

A SNAKE COILS IN MY HEARTS, WAITING TO STRIKE! BUT AT WHAT?
LONGSHOT, REMEMBER? THAT'S THE ONE WE'RE AFTER.
WHAT ARE YOU RATTLING ON ABOUT, YOU BAROQUE APPENDAGE?! HIDE THOSE EXTRA ARMS FROM MY SIGHT!
THOOMP!
BEHOLD THIS GLORIOUS PLANET! JUST EXQUISITE!
KAPAK!
EXQUISITELY DULL.
KAPAK!
KAPAK!
AND I, MOJO THE LIFEBRINGER, SHALL OWN IT!
LIFEBRINGER HA! EVERYTHING UP AND DIES IN YOUR WAKE, SWEETHEART.
I'LL BRING FERTILITY TO THIS LAND!
FZZZZZZZZ
IF YOU DON'T KILL EVERYTHING IN SIGHT, FIRST.
AND ALL WILL WORSHIP ME!
WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.
I AM A MAN OF SIMPLE DESIRES.
DID YOU KNOW, SPIRAL, THAT WORSHIP BRINGS ME POWER?
OH, WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW-- YOU NEVER WORSHIPPED ME PROPERLY.
IMAGINE! ALL THAT LOVE AND ADORATION POURING IN, ALL DIRECTED AT ME!

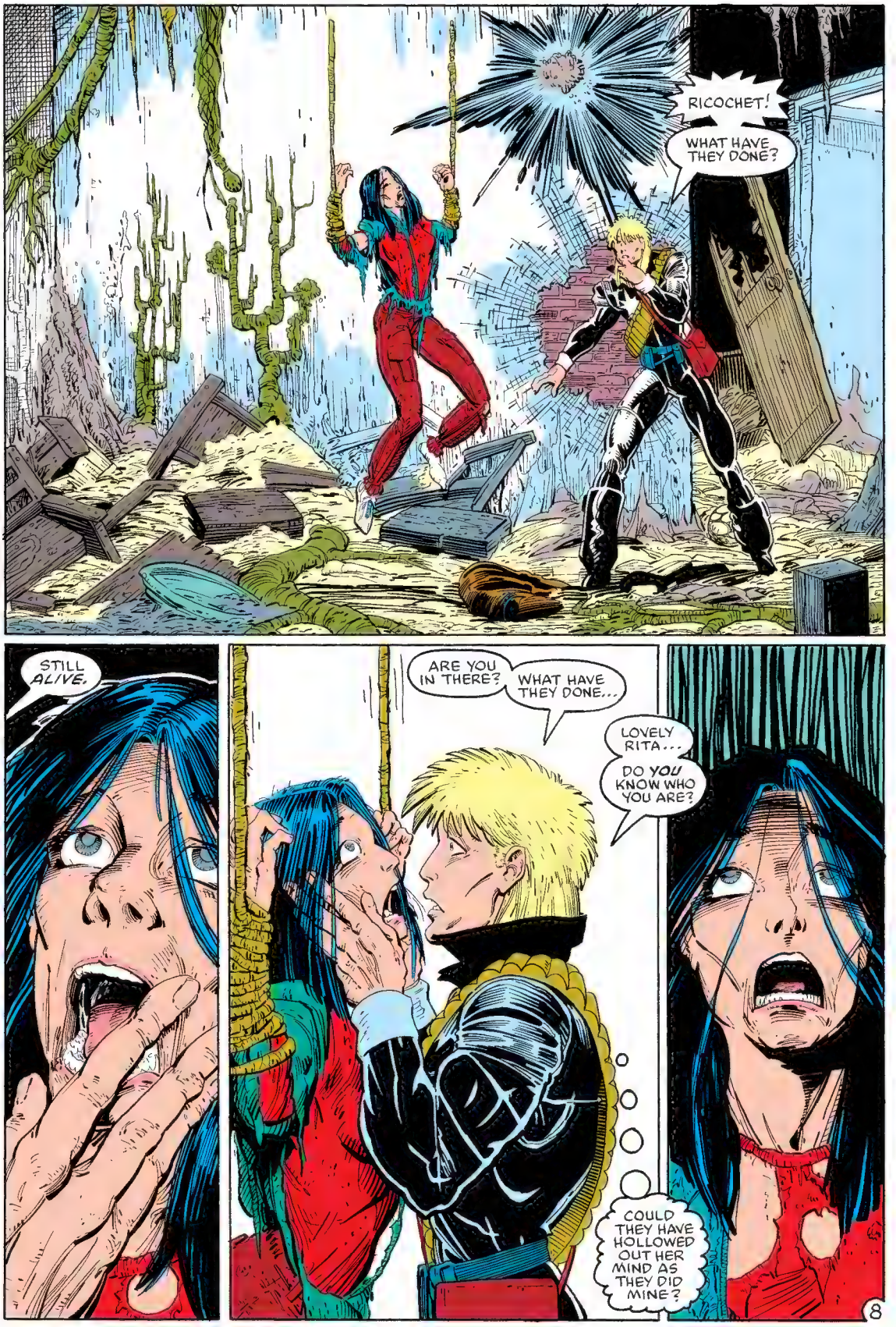

GUESS THAT WOULD MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING.
LOOK UPON MY FIRST KINGDOM!
I'M NOT IMPRESSED.
I LOVE YOU WHEN YOU'RE NASTY, SPIRAL. KEEP IT UP.
THIS PLACE NEEDS SPICING UP, A DASH OF FLASH.
COME ON, SPIRAL, DANCE!
WE'LL SLIP BETWEEN TIMESPACE AND EXPLORE OUR NEW HOME.
SALE
THERE! INVISIBLE EYES ARE BETTER TO SEE WITH! LET US FIND MY THRONE! I KNOW IT'S HERE SOMEWHERE.
BUT CHURCH IS BORING AN' I ALREADY FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA PUKE!
DO I HAVE TO KNEEL? MAKES MY KNEES HURT!
QUIET OR YOU'LL SIT THROUGH MASS TWICE! DADDY FEELS SICK, TOO, ALL OF A SUDDEN.

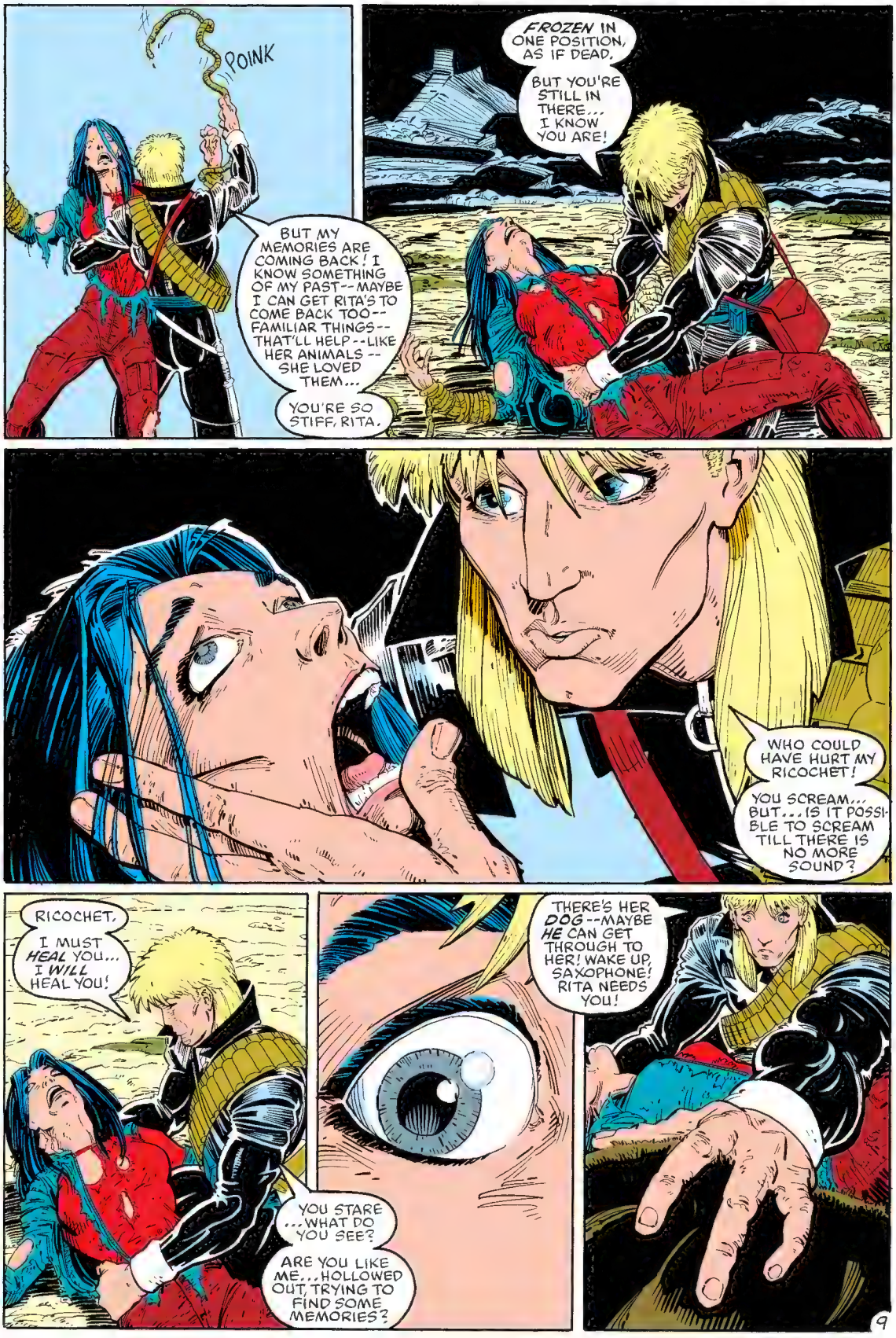

WHY'S THAT STOP-LIGHT FLICKERING?
OH! MY NEW FLORAL CORSAGE IS WILTED ALREADY!
FUNNY, I JUST WOUND MY WATCH, WHY'D IT QUIT TICKING?!
GEE, HONEY, YOUR FACE LOOKS ALL SPLOTCHY.
ERDAMS
LOOK AT THESE CREATURES! SUCH GLOOMS, SUCH NAMELESS DISEASES. SWINGING ARMS, WALKING ON STICKS LIKE YOU, DEAREST SPIRAL -- UGH. WHERE ARE THEY GOING?!
WHY AREN'T THEY PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO THEIR MOST HOLY ONE, MOJO?
WE'RE INVISIBLE, REMEMBER..?
YOU MAY BE A GENIUS, MOJO, BUT YOU'RE ALSO AN IDIOT. YOU MUST HAVE PULLED YOUR BRAINWIRES TOO TIGHT THIS MORNING.
AND STOP TOUCHING ME LIKE YOU OWNED ME! UGH!
I DO OWN YOU, DEAREST SPIRAL!
LOOK AT THE HAIRBALL! WE DON'T HAVE ONE OF THESE IN OUR REALM!
COME HERE, PRETTY, YOU'RE MINE NOW!
IT SPITS! THAT'S NO WAY TO SPEAK TO A HOLY ONE! WHO'S CONTROLLING YOUR TONGUE?
ra'aarrrrr
NOW WHAT'S IT DOING?
HOW DARE IT DIE ON ME? DOESN'T IT REALIZE WHO I AM?

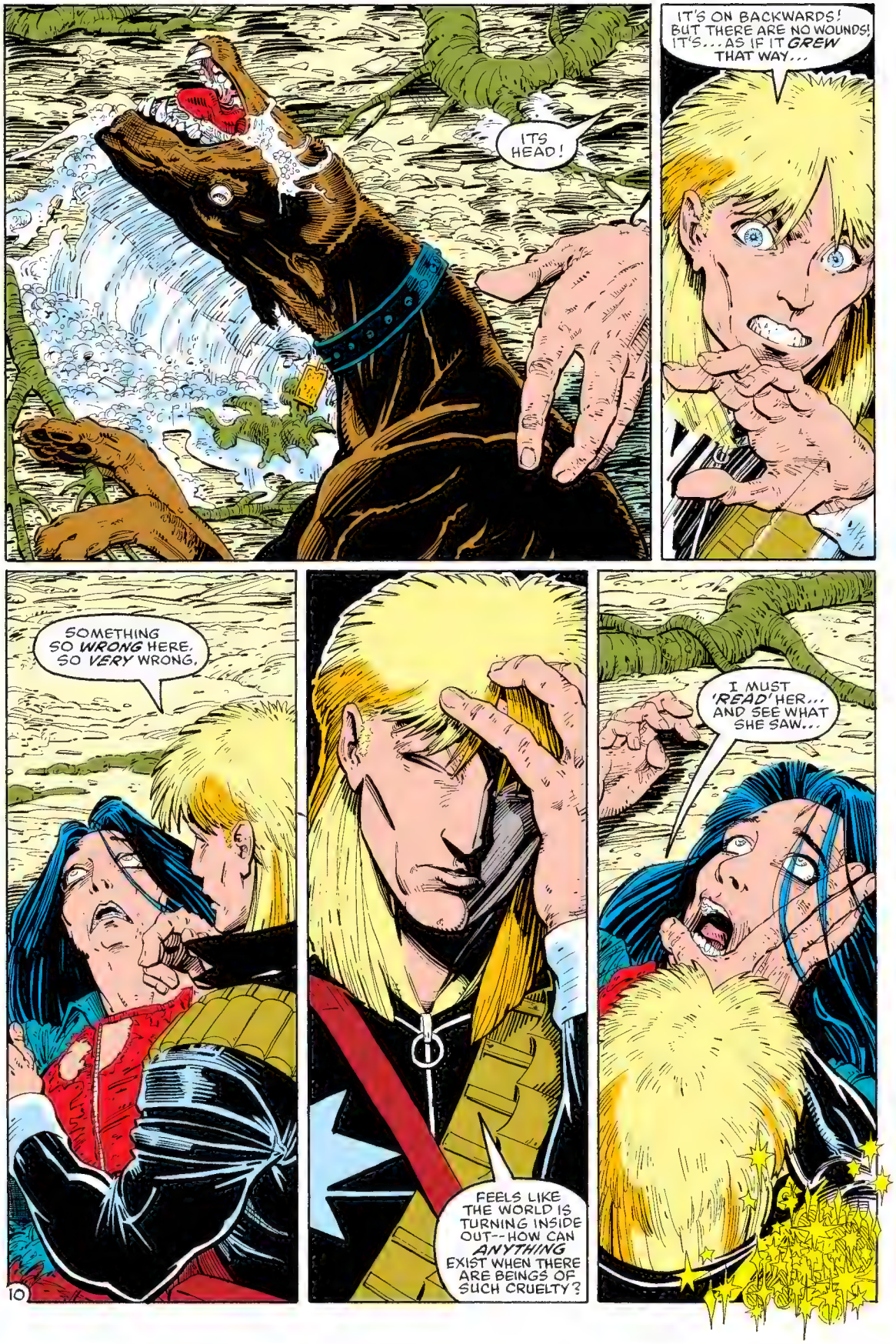
YOU'RE SO CLEVER, MOJO. YOU GIVE ME ALL THESE EXTRA ARMS THEN BRING ME TO A PLANET FULL OF TWO-ARMED CREATURES.
WHAT BETTER A WAY TO MAKE ME HATE HUMANS, THEN HARNESS THAT HATE FOR YOUR PETTY DESPOTISM, YOU ACT COMPLETELY PSYCHOTIC BUT I KNOW YOU'RE REALLY THIRTY MOVES AHEAD OF EVERYONE.
SMILE WHEN YOU TALK LIKE THAT, DARLING.
THEY DO HAVE SUCH PATHETIC FACES.
LOOK AT THIS ONE TRYING TO HIDE ITSELF IN A WRAPPING.
OOOSH
OOM
SPIRAL, WE'RE HOME! THIS IS MY ROYAL COURT!
AND THEY'VE ALREADY COME TO WORSHIP ME! THEY'VE PROBABLY BEEN WAITING CENTURIES FOR MY COMING!
A FEW MINOR ADJUSTMENTS PERHAPS... I DON'T LIKE THE COLOR... PERHAPS A FEW MORE ROOMS... SOME LATTICE WORK...
SPIRAL, HELP! A MILLION DECISIONS! BUT YOU HAVE NO TASTE--ESPECIALLY IN MEN... I MEAN LONGSHOT--OF ALL THE HEARTS TO WANT TO WIN, HIS IS...
WATCH IT, MOJO.
WHAT COLOR TO PAINT IT...?!
OH, WHERE'S MAJOR DOMO WHEN I NEED HIM!

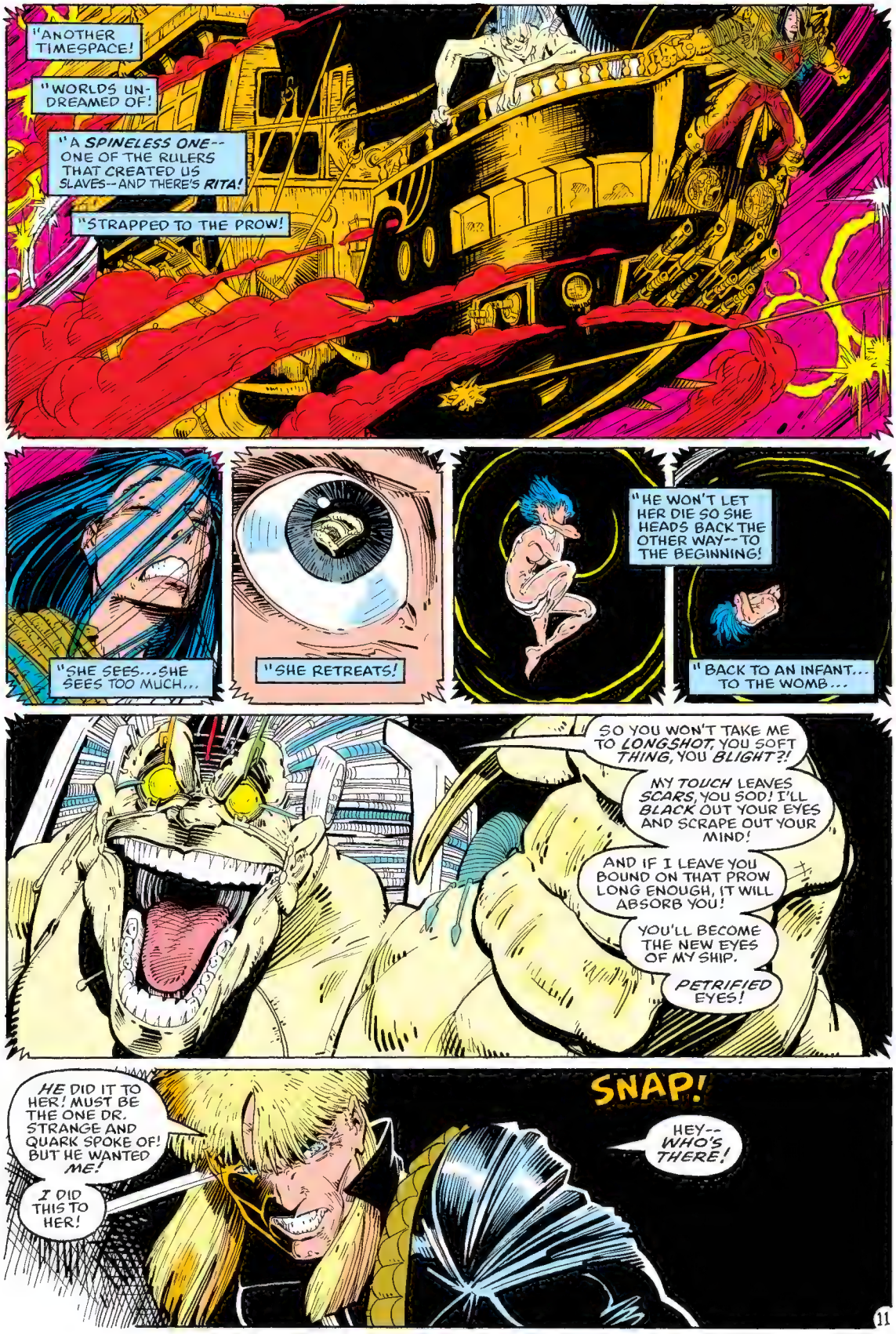

NOW WHAT WOULD DOMO DO?
HE'D GET THEM IN THE PROPER FRAME OF MIND!
A FEW BRAIN-TWISTS TO THE RIGHT... SOT THEM BAWDY!
THERE!
MOJO!
OUR LORD MOJO, WHO ART MOST HOLY!
HALLOWED BE HIS FAME!
LONGSHOT CAN HAVE HIS LUCK AND HIS MIRACLES, SO WHAT IF HE RUINS MY SLAVE TRADE AND MOVIE INDUSTRY?
WHO NEEDS THAT OLD DIMENSION? NO NEED NOW FOR ALL THE BOTHER OF CONSTRUCTING ROTTEN SLAVES LIKE YOU, SPIRAL, WHEN THERE'S A WHOLE PLANET FULL OF THEM HERE-- EASILY TAMED!
THROUGH OBJECTS COMES POWER, AND THESE WORSHIPPING HANDS SHALL BUILD ME A CITADEL, A TRIBUTE TO ME THAT RIVALS MY POWER BACK HOME!
MOJO! REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME YOU BUILT A TOWER? IT WEAKENED YOU...
SHUT UP, SPIRAL! QUIT SPOILING MY FUN.
NOW WHERE WAS I? YES! AFTER THE TOWER, ALL I'LL NEED IS CONTROL OF THE PLANET'S AIRWAVES! MY TOWER WILL ZAP EVERYONE INTO WORSHIPPING ME!

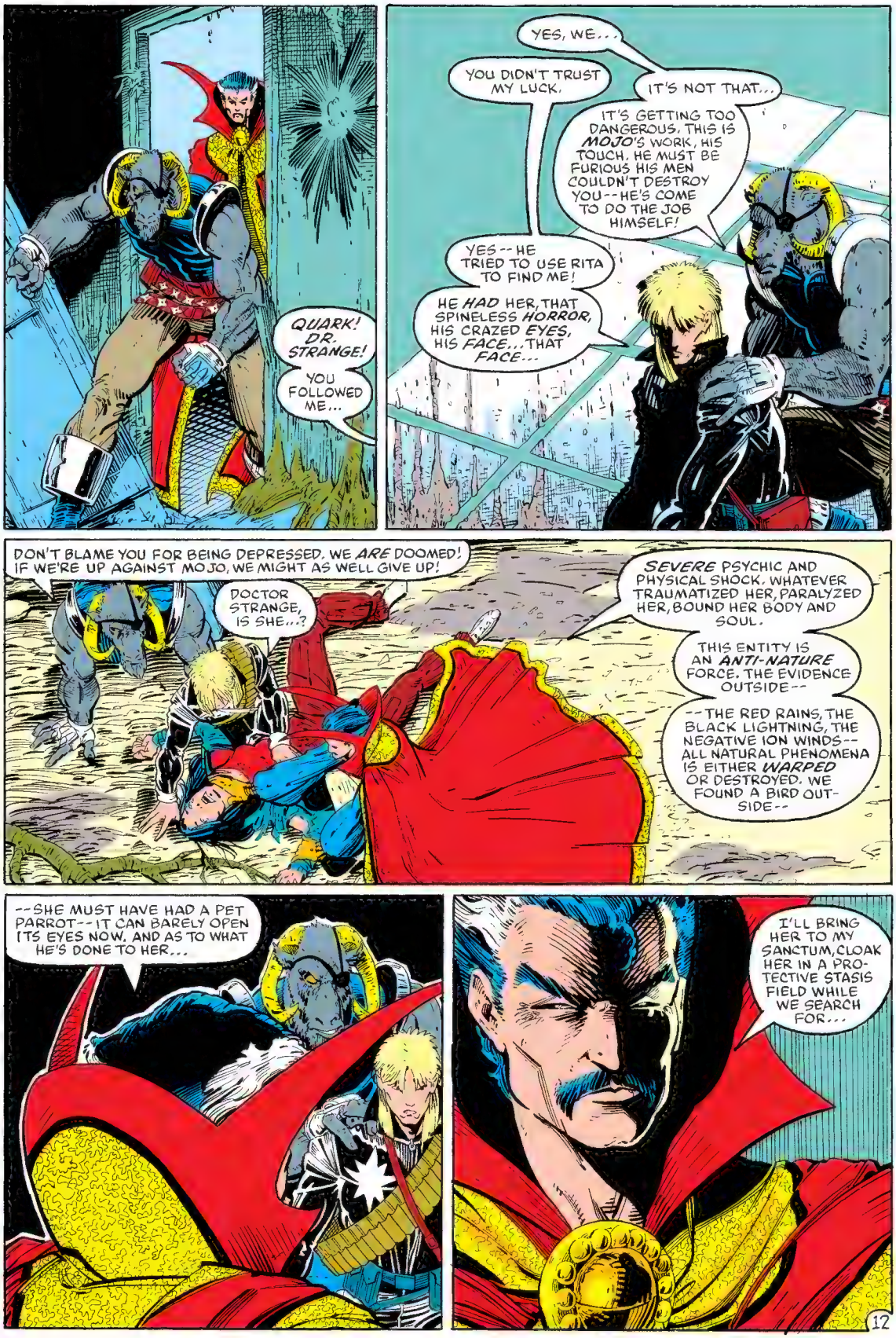

ELSEWHERE...
HER HOME.
THE HOME OF RIDE-ROCKET WILD RICOCHET RITA.
HER EYES.
EYES THAT HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH.
EYES THAT STARE BUT DO NOT SEE.
HER SCREAM.
THE SCREAM THAT WENT BEYOND SOUND.
RITA?


RICOCHET!
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?
STILL ALIVE.
ARE YOU IN THERE?
WHAT HAVE THEY DONE...
LOVELY RITA...
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?
COULD THEY HAVE HOLLOWED OUT HER MIND AS THEY DID MINE?


POINK
BUT MY MEMORIES ARE COMING BACK! I KNOW SOMETHING OF MY PAST--MAYBE I CAN GET RITA'S TO COME BACK TOO--FAMILIAR THINGS--THAT'LL HELP--LIKE HER ANIMALS--SHE LOVED THEM...
YOU'RE SO STIFF, RITA.
FROZEN IN ONE POSITION, AS IF DEAD.
BUT YOU'RE STILL IN THERE... I KNOW YOU ARE!
WHO COULD HAVE HURT MY RICOCHET!
YOU SCREAM... BUT...IS IT POSSIBLE TO SCREAM TILL THERE IS NO MORE SOUND?
RICOCHET.
I MUST HEAL YOU... I WILL HEAL YOU!
YOU STARE ...WHAT DO YOU SEE?
ARE YOU LIKE ME...HOLLOWED OUT, TRYING TO FIND SOME MEMORIES?
THERE'S HER DOG--MAYBE HE CAN GET THROUGH TO HER! WAKE UP, SAXOPHONE! RITA NEEDS YOU!


ITS HEAD!
IT'S ON BACKWARDS! BUT THERE ARE NO WOUNDS! IT'S... AS IF IT *GREW* THAT WAY...
SOMETHING SO *WRONG* HERE, SO *VERY* WRONG.
FEELS LIKE THE WORLD IS TURNING INSIDE OUT--HOW CAN *ANYTHING* EXIST WHEN THERE ARE BEINGS OF SUCH CRUELTY?
I MUST *'READ'* HER... AND SEE WHAT SHE SAW...

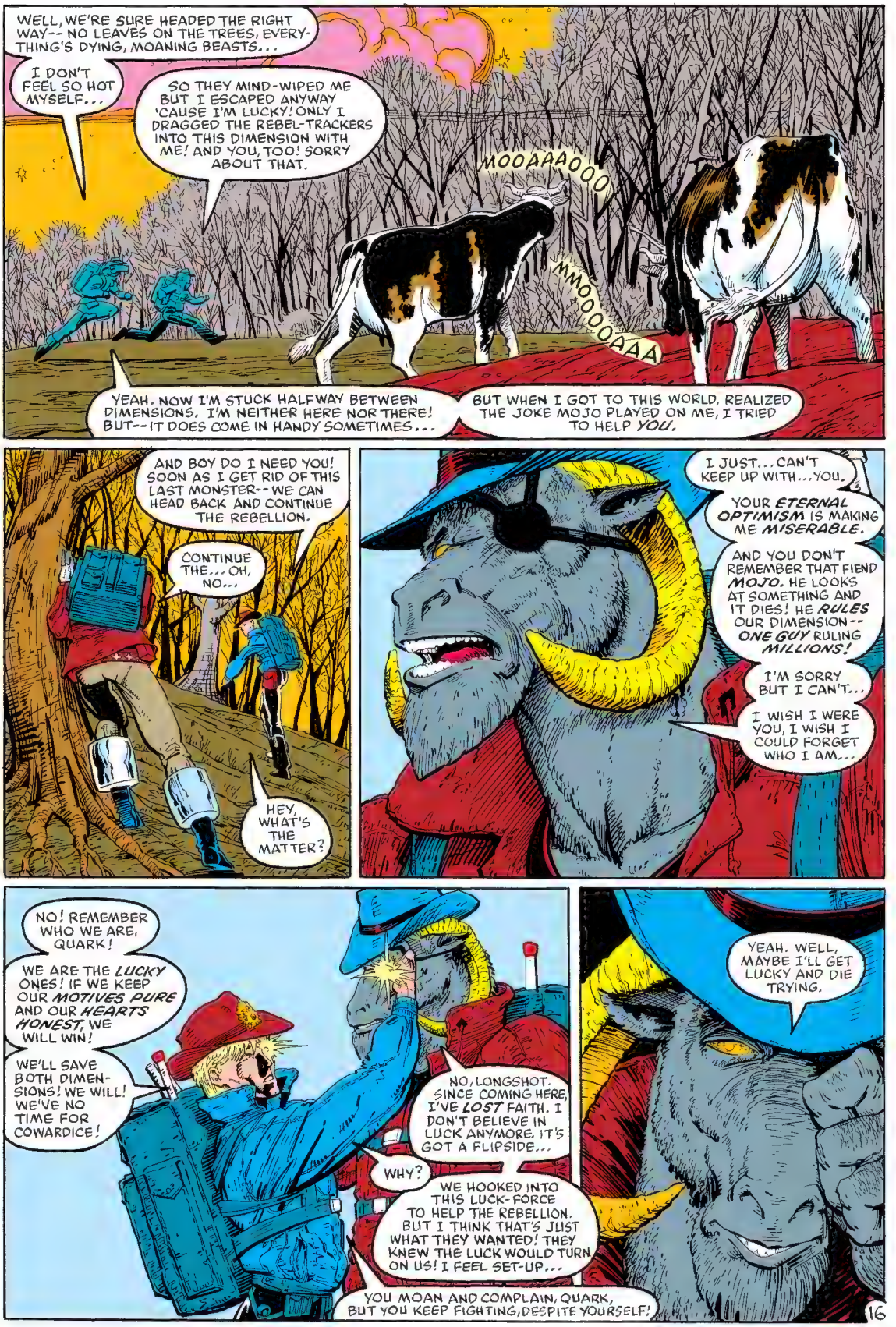

"ANOTHER TIMESPACE!
"WORLDS UN-DREAMED OF!
"A SPINELESS ONE--ONE OF THE RULERS THAT CREATED US SLAVES--AND THERE'S RITA!
"STRAPPED TO THE PROW!
"SHE SEES...SHE SEES TOO MUCH...
"SHE RETREATS!
"HE WON'T LET HER DIE SO SHE HEADS BACK THE OTHER WAY--TO THE BEGINNING!
"BACK TO AN INFANT... TO THE WOMB...
SO YOU WON'T TAKE ME TO LONGSHOT, YOU SOFT THING, YOU BLIGHT?!
MY TOUCH LEAVES SCARS, YOU SOD! I'LL BLACK OUT YOUR EYES AND SCRAPE OUT YOUR MIND!
AND IF I LEAVE YOU BOUND ON THAT PROW LONG ENOUGH, IT WILL ABSORB YOU!
YOU'LL BECOME THE NEW EYES OF MY SHIP.
PETRIFIED EYES!
HE DID IT TO HER! MUST BE THE ONE DR. STRANGE AND QUARK SPOKE OF! BUT HE WANTED ME!
I DID THIS TO HER!
SNAP!
HEY--WHO'S THERE!

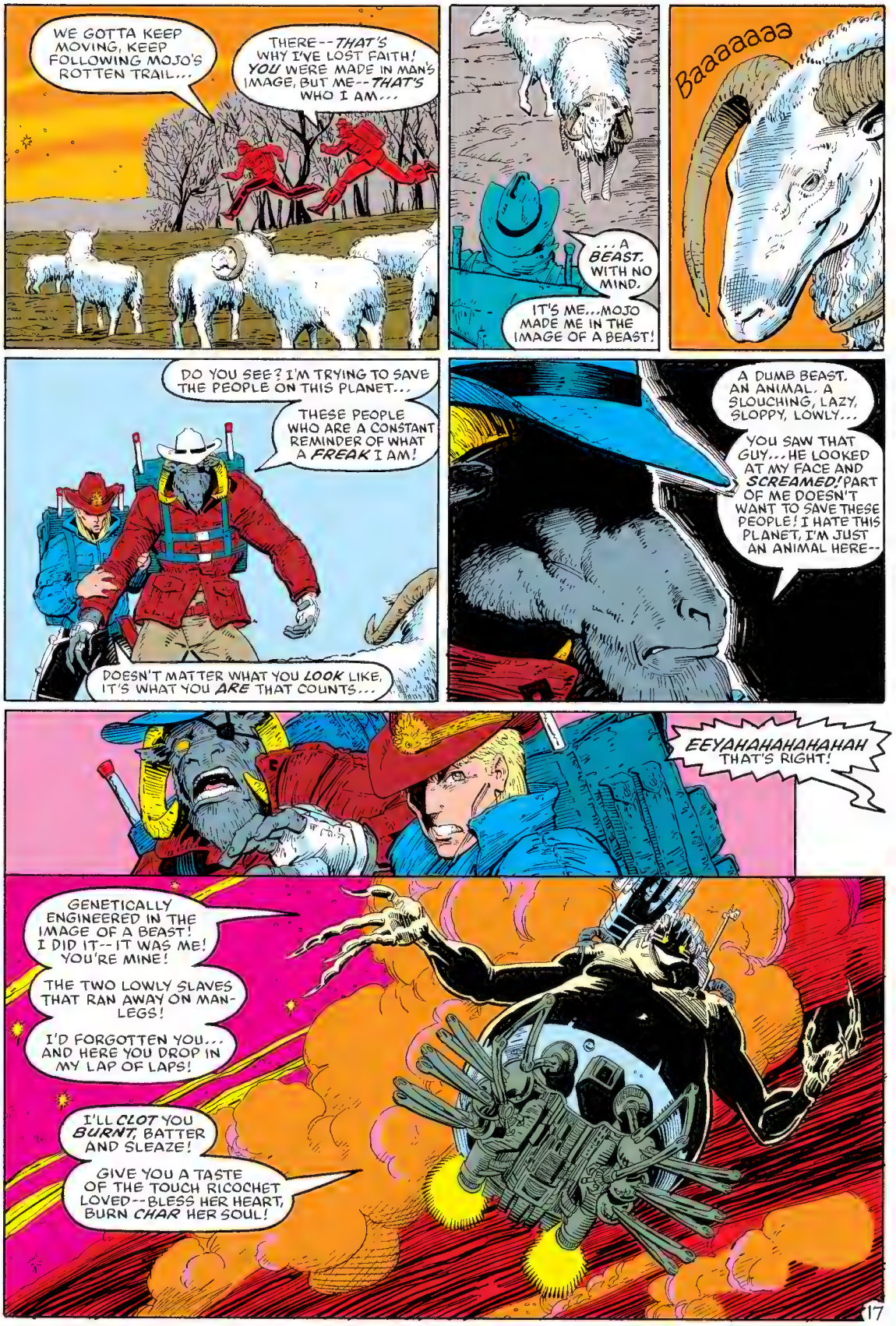

QUARK! DR. STRANGE!
YOU FOLLOWED ME...
YES, WE...
YOU DIDN'T TRUST MY LUCK.
IT'S NOT THAT...
IT'S GETTING TOO DANGEROUS. THIS IS MOJO'S WORK, HIS TOUCH. HE MUST BE FURIOUS HIS MEN COULDN'T DESTROY YOU--HE'S COME TO DO THE JOB HIMSELF!
YES--HE TRIED TO USE RITA TO FIND ME!
HE HAD HER, THAT SPINELESS HORROR, HIS CRAZED EYES, HIS FACE...THAT FACE...
DON'T BLAME YOU FOR BEING DEPRESSED. WE ARE DOOMED! IF WE'RE UP AGAINST MOJO, WE MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP!
DOCTOR STRANGE, IS SHE...?
SEVERE PSYCHIC AND PHYSICAL SHOCK. WHATEVER TRAUMATIZED HER, PARALYZED HER, BOUND HER BODY AND SOUL.
THIS ENTITY IS AN ANTI-NATURE FORCE. THE EVIDENCE OUTSIDE--
--THE RED RAINS, THE BLACK LIGHTNING, THE NEGATIVE ION WINDS--ALL NATURAL PHENOMENA IS EITHER WARPED OR DESTROYED. WE FOUND A BIRD OUTSIDE--
--SHE MUST HAVE HAD A PET PARROT--IT CAN BARELY OPEN ITS EYES NOW, AND AS TO WHAT HE'S DONE TO HER...
I'LL BRING HER TO MY SANCTUM, CLOAK HER IN A PROTECTIVE STASIS FIELD WHILE WE SEARCH FOR...

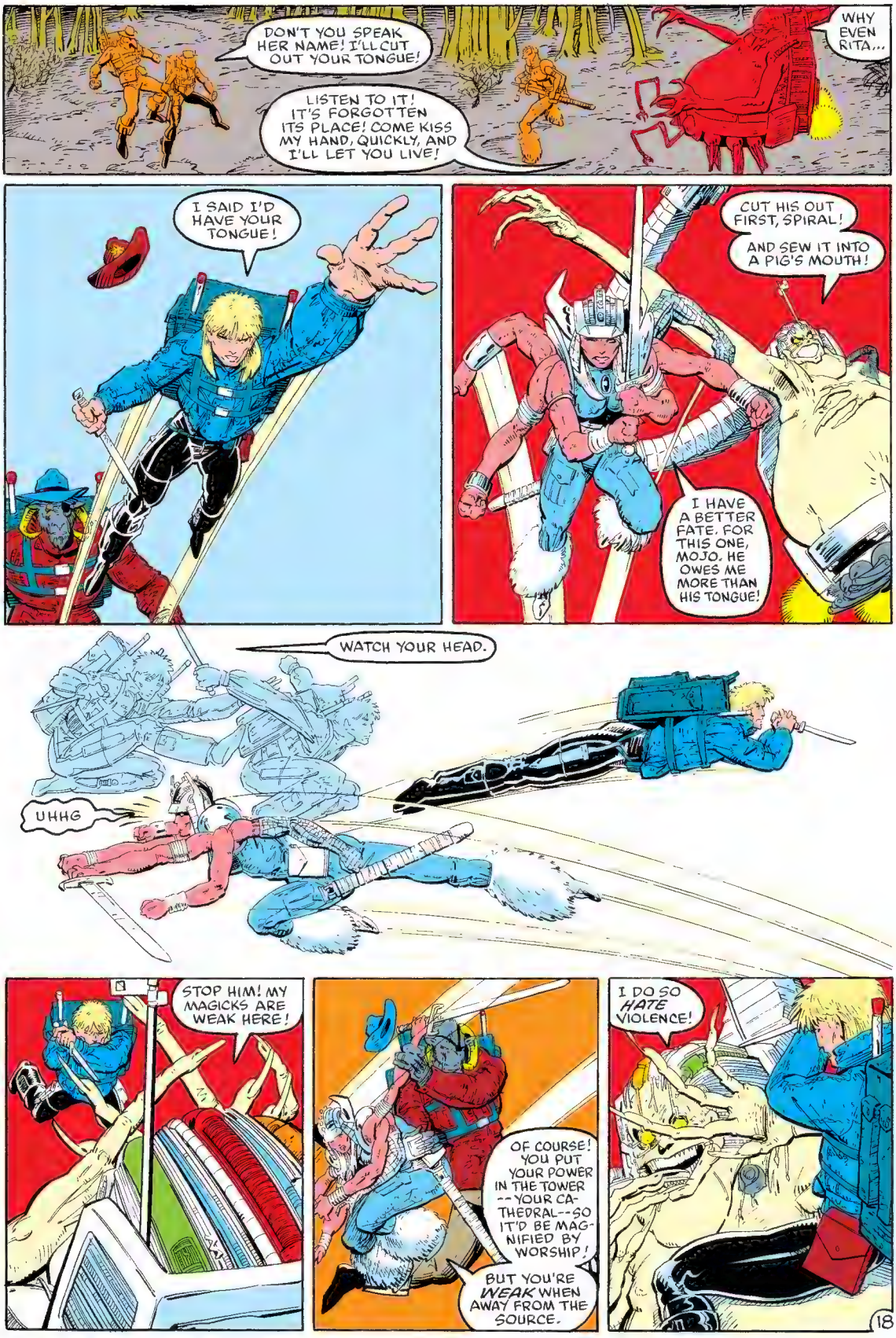
NO! YOU HEAL HER.
IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE. THERE MAY BE NOTHING LEFT TO HEAL. BUT...
INTUITION IS FAR FROM A PRECISE SCIENCE... AND YET IF I LISTEN TO MINE NOW...
PERHAPS I SHOULD LET LONGSHOT LEAD THE WAY IN THIS ONE. MY HEALING RITA MAY BE THE KEY...
I HOPE I'M RIGHT...
ALL RIGHT, LONGSHOT. IT MUST BE YOUR DESTINY TO TAKE CONTROL.
I'LL TELEPORT RITA TO MY HOME. AS TO SAVING HER...I'LL TRY.
RELIGIOUS ...ZZZZKT... CATHEDRALZZZK
THAT TELEVISION HAS BEEN FADING IN AND OUT. ALL ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES ARE DISRUPTED BY THIS ENTITY'S WAKE...THE MAGNITUDE OF HIS POWER IS...EH?
ARCHETECZZKK BIZARRE..*
THAT IMAGE ON THE SCREEN ...THAT STRUCTURE...
WE'RE OFF! RITA HAD LOTS OF WEAPONS AROUND!
QUARK--EXPLAIN TO LONGSHOT HOW TO CONTACT ME ONCE YOU'VE FOUND MOJO.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF RITA!
SO LONG, DOC...
...LET'S JUST HOPE THE NEXT TIME WE MEET...IT ISN'T IN THE REALM OF THE DEAD...
QUARK!
QUITE A DIFFERENCE OF SPIRIT IN THOSE TWO--A HEADLONG POSITIVE SPIRIT AND A DIEHARD NEGATIVE ONE. PERHAPS THE COMBINATION...WILL CREATE AN EFFECTIVE FORCE.
THIS IS ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS WHEN THE WORLD SEEMS TO PAUSE AT A PRECIPICE OF FATE...
WHICH WAY WILL IT FALL?
TIME FOR ONE OF YOUR MIRACLES, LONGSHOT.
MY MIND TELLS ME TO SEEK OUT MOJO AND DESTROY HIM... BUT SOME OTHER VOICE TELLS ME TO WAIT...LET THIS UNFOLD IN A MORE FATED MANNER...
FOR THE SAKE OF THE COSMOS, I HOPE IT'S NOT ILL-FATED TO TRUST A LONGSHOT...

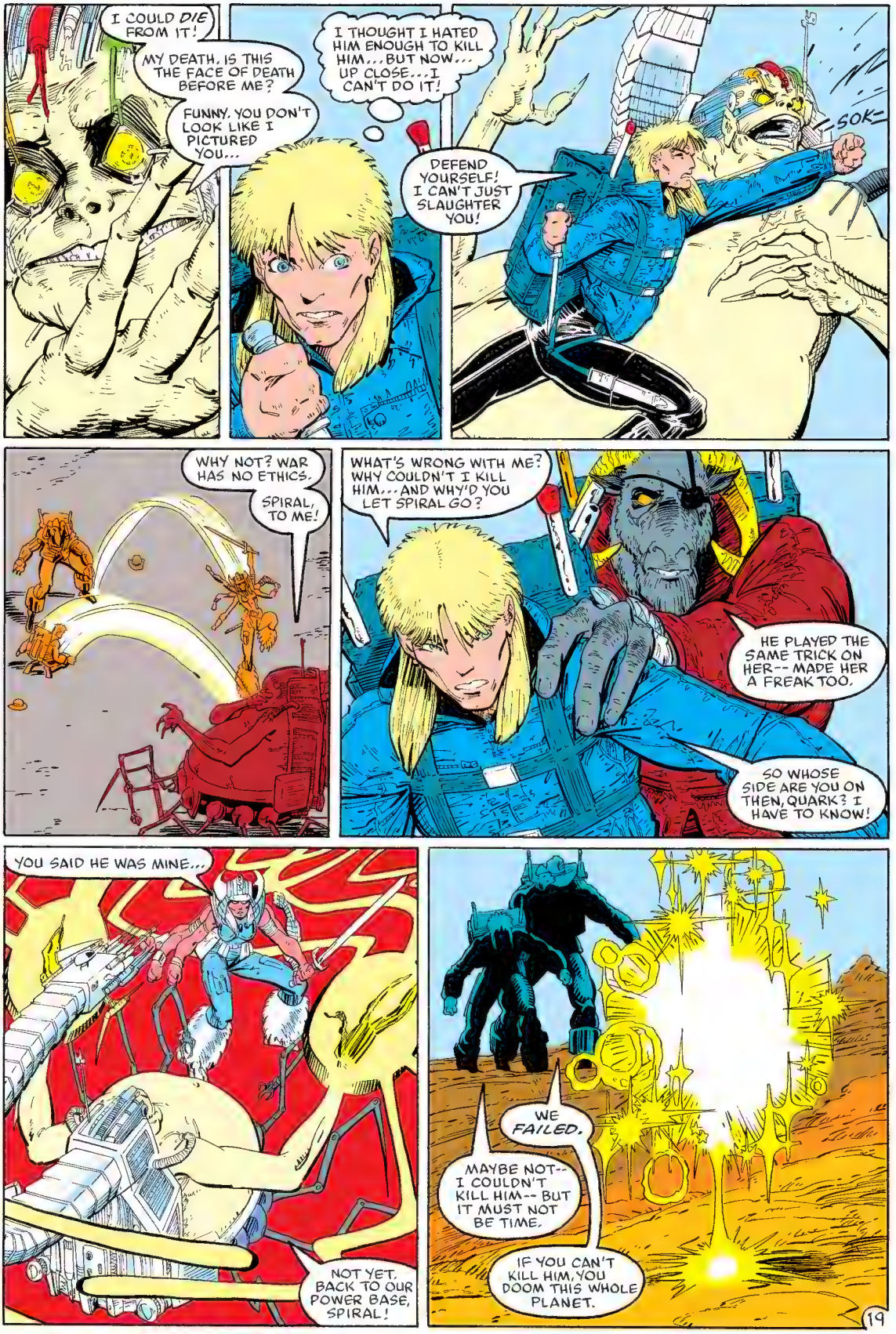
AND SOON...
NOBODY'S GOT HORNS, YOU MONKEYBRAIN.
BUT I SAW 'EM! HE'S GOT HORNS BIGGER 'N EARS!
YOU DUMB GIRL. THEM'S COWBOYS GOIN' AFTER THE BAD GUYS, WITH THAR SIX-GUNS BLAZIN'!
SO I FERTILIZE THE DARN THING, WATER THE HECK OUT OF IT, AND THE LAWN STILL TURNS BROWN, AND THE TREES TOO! I GIVE UP. ZZZZZ
NOW A BIT OF LOCAL NEWS--A STRANGE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL...
MOJO CAME THIS WAY ALL RIGHT! READY TO GO ON?
YEAH, 'CEPT IF ANYONE NOTICES MY FACE, WE'RE DOOMED. I NEED A HOOD TO HIDE MY WHOLE HEAD.
WHY? YOU'VE GOT A GREAT FACE!
IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE ELSE'S! THAT'S WHY! WHY'D MOJO MAKE ME LIKE THIS ANYWAY? IS HE SO TWISTED HE FORESAW SOME GREAT JOKE HE COULD PLAY ON ME?
CHASING HIM IS FUTILE, YOU KNOW.
WE'RE JUST A COUPLE OF FLEAS, NEXT TO THE POWER OF MOJO.
CUT IT OUT, QUARK. NOTHING'S EVER FUTILE! WE GOT LUCK ON OUR SIDE!
...IT'S A TURN BACK TO OLD TIME RELIGION...
HEY, WHAT'S RELIGION? I KEEP HEARING THOSE RADIOS ...AND LOOK AT THAT... WHAT'S IT CALLED? OH YEAH, TV IMAGE...
IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS, YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
BESIDES, IT DOESN'T CONCERN US. THOSE BOXES JUST RATTLE ON ABOUT THIS PLANET, THE SAME STORIES REPEATED OVER AND OVER...
...THESE GENTLE, GOD-FEARING FOLK HAVE POOLED THEIR ENERGY TO BUILD A NEW CHURCH...
...STRANGE THING IS, THE ARCHITECTURE IS SO BIZARRE IT LOOKS OTHER-WORLDLY... THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS OF A 'NEW GOD'...
BUT THAT BUILDING ON THE TV...
FORGET IT, LONGSHOT. WHATEVER IT IS YOU'LL WANT TO SAVE SOMEBODY--THAT'S HOW YOU GOT MIND-WIPED TO BEGIN WITH--AND WE JUST DON'T HAVE TIME!
BUT I SURE WISH YOU'D REMEMBERED YOU LIKED SAVING PEOPLE WHEN I WAS FIGHTING GOG!
COME ON, STRANGE SAID TO LOOK FOR UNNATURAL STUFF IN THE ENVIRONMENT--THAT'LL LEAD US TO MOJO. LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH AND DIE.

SO WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I LIKED SAVING PEOPLE? WHAT WAS I LIKE BEFORE THEY BRAIN-WIPED ME, QUARK? DID YOU KNOW ME?
NO, BUT I'D SURE HEARD OF YOU. YOU WERE LEGEND, A REBEL LEADER TRYING TO FREE US. IT WAS HOPELESS, OF COURSE.
SOUND'S EXCITING, WHAT'S HOPELESS ABOUT IT?
THE SECRET MEETINGS, THE HIDING, THE FEAR. AND THE REBELS WERE ALWAYS SQUASHED BY MOJO...OR TURNED INSIDE-OUT BY WIZARDS ...OR BETRAYED BY A COMRADE...AND IT WAS BACK IN THE OLD SHACKLES AGAIN.
YOU WERE BRANDED A HERO AND THEN ALMOST CRUCIFIED FOR IT. SURE DOESN'T PAY TO BE A HERO.
SO WHY ARE YOU ONE?
YOU WERE IN THE UNDERGROUND--PRETENDED TO BE ONE OF THE GUYS WHO WERE HUNTING ME--THEN YOU DECIDED TO SAVE ME, WHY?
THAT WAS BEFORE I REALIZED HOW HOPELESS IT ALL IS.
WE'LL LOSE. THEN THEY'LL JUST GUT OUR MINDS. OR KILL OUR FAMILIES. OR SELL US TO A WIZARD QUACK FOR EXPERIMENTS.
DID I HAVE A FAMILY?! I WANT TO KNOW! ALL I HAVE LEFT ARE THE VAGUE GHOST IMAGES OF A PAST. STILL, IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING!
WISH THEY'D WIPED MY MIND. A LIFE NOT WORTH LIVING IS BETTER FORGOTTEN.
WELL, I WANT MY PAST BACK. THEN IF I WANT TO FORGET IT, AT LEAST IT'LL BE MY CHOICE!
HEY, WATCH OUT!
BUMP
SORRY, SIR, ALL MY FAULT...
YOUR... FACE!
EEEAAAYYAH!
YOU ALL RIGHT, BUDDY? GUESS THE LOCALS DON'T LIKE YOUR LOOKS.
I'M GETTING USED TO IT.

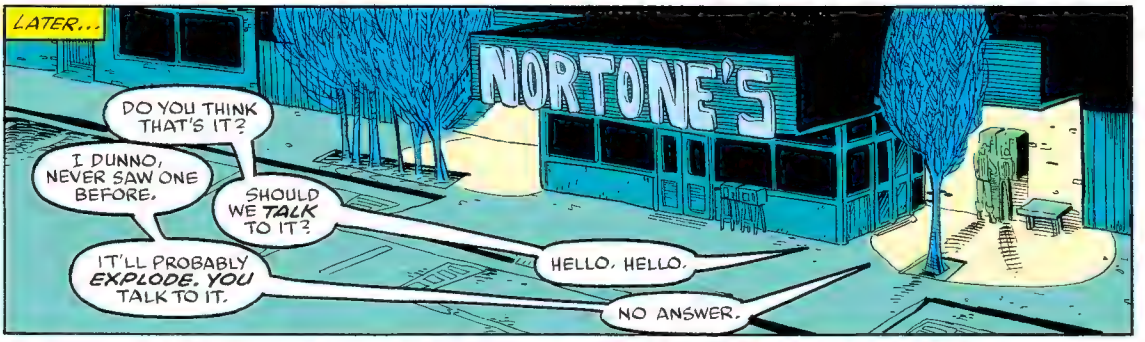

WELL, WE'RE SURE HEADED THE RIGHT WAY-- NO LEAVES ON THE TREES, EVERYTHING'S DYING, MOANING BEASTS...
I DON'T FEEL SO HOT MYSELF...
SO THEY MIND-WIPED ME BUT I ESCAPED ANYWAY 'CAUSE I'M LUCKY! ONLY I DRAGGED THE REBEL-TRACKERS INTO THIS DIMENSION WITH ME! AND YOU, TOO! SORRY ABOUT THAT.
MOOAAAOOO
MMOOOOAAA
YEAH. NOW I'M STUCK HALFWAY BETWEEN DIMENSIONS. I'M NEITHER HERE NOR THERE! BUT--IT DOES COME IN HANDY SOMETIMES...
BUT WHEN I GOT TO THIS WORLD, REALIZED THE JOKE MOJO PLAYED ON ME, I TRIED TO HELP YOU.
AND BOY DO I NEED YOU! SOON AS I GET RID OF THIS LAST MONSTER--WE CAN HEAD BACK AND CONTINUE THE REBELLION.
CONTINUE THE... OH, NO...
HEY, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I JUST...CAN'T KEEP UP WITH...YOU.
YOUR ETERNAL OPTIMISM IS MAKING ME MISERABLE.
AND YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT FIEND MOJO. HE LOOKS AT SOMETHING AND IT DIES! HE RULES OUR DIMENSION--ONE GUY RULING MILLIONS!
I'M SORRY BUT I CAN'T...
I WISH I WERE YOU, I WISH I COULD FORGET WHO I AM...
NO! REMEMBER WHO WE ARE, QUARK!
WE ARE THE LUCKY ONES! IF WE KEEP OUR MOTIVES PURE AND OUR HEARTS HONEST, WE WILL WIN!
WE'LL SAVE BOTH DIMENSIONS! WE WILL! WE'VE NO TIME FOR COWARDICE!
NO, LONGSHOT. SINCE COMING HERE, I'VE LOST FAITH. I DON'T BELIEVE IN LUCK ANYMORE. IT'S GOT A FLIPSIDE...
WHY?
WE HOOKED INTO THIS LUCK-FORCE TO HELP THE REBELLION. BUT I THINK THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY WANTED! THEY KNEW THE LUCK WOULD TURN ON US! I FEEL SET-UP...
YOU MOAN AND COMPLAIN, QUARK, BUT YOU KEEP FIGHTING, DESPITE YOURSELF!
YEAH. WELL, MAYBE I'LL GET LUCKY AND DIE TRYING.

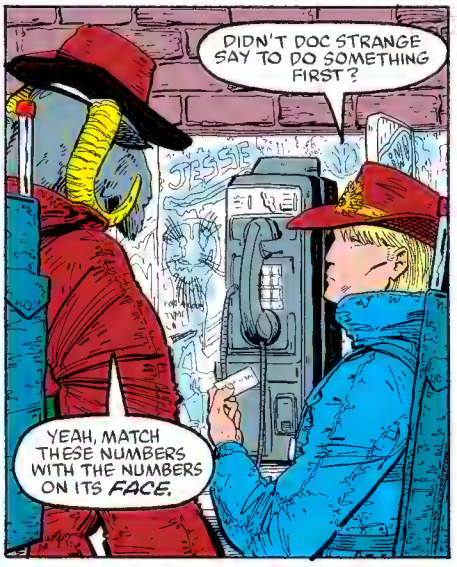

WE GOTTA KEEP MOVING, KEEP FOLLOWING MOJO'S ROTTEN TRAIL...
THERE--THAT'S WHY I'VE LOST FAITH! YOU WERE MADE IN MAN'S IMAGE, BUT ME--THAT'S WHO I AM...
...A BEAST. WITH NO MIND.
IT'S ME...MOJO MADE ME IN THE IMAGE OF A BEAST!
Baaaaaaa
DO YOU SEE? I'M TRYING TO SAVE THE PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET...
THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE A CONSTANT REMINDER OF WHAT A FREAK I AM!
DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE, IT'S WHAT YOU ARE THAT COUNTS...
A DUMB BEAST. AN ANIMAL. A SLOUCHING, LAZY, SLOPPY, LOWLY...
YOU SAW THAT GUY...HE LOOKED AT MY FACE AND SCREAMED! PART OF ME DOESN'T WANT TO SAVE THESE PEOPLE! I HATE THIS PLANET, I'M JUST AN ANIMAL HERE--
EEYAHAHAHAHAHAH THAT'S RIGHT!
GENETICALLY ENGINEERED IN THE IMAGE OF A BEAST! I DID IT--IT WAS ME! YOU'RE MINE!
THE TWO LOWLY SLAVES THAT RAN AWAY ON MAN-LEGS!
I'D FORGOTTEN YOU... AND HERE YOU DROP IN MY LAP OF LAPS!
I'LL CLOT YOU BURNT, BATTER AND SLEAZE!
GIVE YOU A TASTE OF THE TOUCH RICOCHET LOVED--BLESS HER HEART, BURN CHAR HER SOUL!

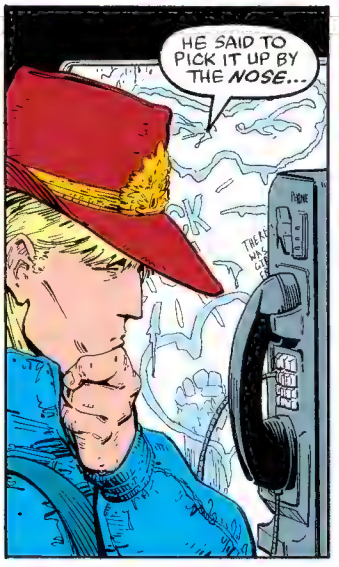

DON'T YOU SPEAK HER NAME! I'LL CUT OUT YOUR TONGUE!
LISTEN TO IT! IT'S FORGOTTEN ITS PLACE! COME KISS MY HAND, QUICKLY, AND I'LL LET YOU LIVE!
WHY EVEN RITA...
I SAID I'D HAVE YOUR TONGUE!
CUT HIS OUT FIRST, SPIRAL!
AND SEW IT INTO A PIG'S MOUTH!
I HAVE A BETTER FATE. FOR THIS ONE, MOJO. HE OWES ME MORE THAN HIS TONGUE!
WATCH YOUR HEAD.
UHHG
STOP HIM! MY MAGICKS ARE WEAK HERE!
OF COURSE! YOU PUT YOUR POWER IN THE TOWER --YOUR CATHEDRAL--SO IT'D BE MAGNIFIED BY WORSHIP!
BUT YOU'RE *WEAK* WHEN AWAY FROM THE SOURCE.
I DO SO *HATE* VIOLENCE!

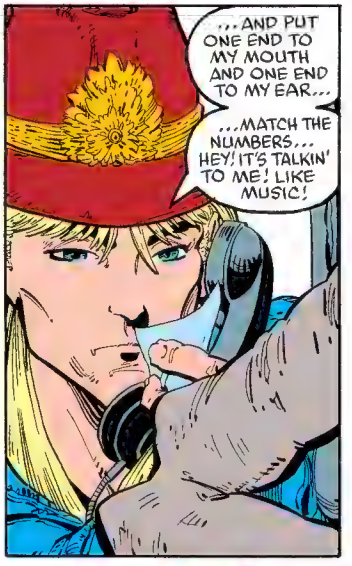

I COULD DIE FROM IT!
MY DEATH. IS THIS THE FACE OF DEATH BEFORE ME?
FUNNY. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE I PICTURED YOU...
I THOUGHT I HATED HIM ENOUGH TO KILL HIM... BUT NOW... UP CLOSE... I CAN'T DO IT!
DEFEND YOURSELF! I CAN'T JUST SLAUGHTER YOU!
-SOK-
WHY NOT? WAR HAS NO ETHICS.
SPIRAL, TO ME!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? WHY COULDN'T I KILL HIM... AND WHY'D YOU LET SPIRAL GO?
HE PLAYED THE SAME TRICK ON HER-- MADE HER A FREAK TOO.
SO WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON THEN, QUARK? I HAVE TO KNOW!
YOU SAID HE WAS MINE...
NOT YET. BACK TO OUR POWER BASE, SPIRAL!
WE FAILED.
MAYBE NOT-- I COULDN'T KILL HIM-- BUT IT MUST NOT BE TIME.
IF YOU CAN'T KILL HIM, YOU DOOM THIS WHOLE PLANET.

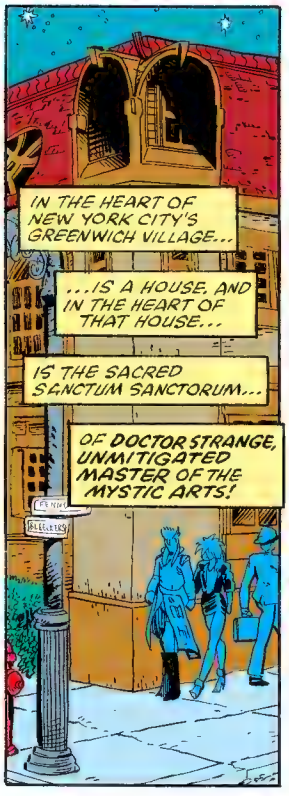
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
YOU HEARD THEM. THIS WAS OUR CHANCE! THEY WERE AWAY FROM THEIR POWER! AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHOSE SIDE YOU'RE ON.
I KNOW. I'M A COWARD...
SMAK
SHUT UP!
SORRY I HIT YOU. IT'S JUST THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS COMPLAINING AND WHINING, SO FULL OF GLOOM AND DOOM.
YOUR SPIRIT'S WRONG! CAN'T YOU RISE ABOVE IT?
I'M A BEAST. BEASTS HAVE NO SPIRIT, AND I GUESS I DON'T TRUST THAT LUCK STUFF. IT SCARES ME. YOU USE IT, AND YOU SHIFT LUCK AWAY FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE.
SOMEONE SOMEWHERE... GETS HURT.
WELL, SOMETHING STOPPED ME FROM KILLING MOJO. I'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF HIM SOME OTHER WAY.
IT'S MY FAULT MOJO AND SPIRAL ARE HERE.
BUT I HAVE NO RIGHT TO KILL THEM. I CAN ONLY BANISH THEM BACK TO WHERE THEY CAME FROM!
COME ON--YOU HEARD WHAT SPIRAL SAID ABOUT THE TOWER--LET'S GO CALL DOCTOR STRANGE AND TELL HIM WHAT'S GOING ON.


LATER...
NORTONE'S
DO YOU THINK THAT'S IT?
I DUNNO, NEVER SAW ONE BEFORE.
SHOULD WE *TALK* TO IT?
IT'LL PROBABLY *EXPLODE. YOU* TALK TO IT.
HELLO. HELLO.
NO ANSWER.


DIDN'T DOC STRANGE SAY TO DO SOMETHING FIRST?
YEAH, MATCH THESE NUMBERS WITH THE NUMBERS ON ITS *FACE.*

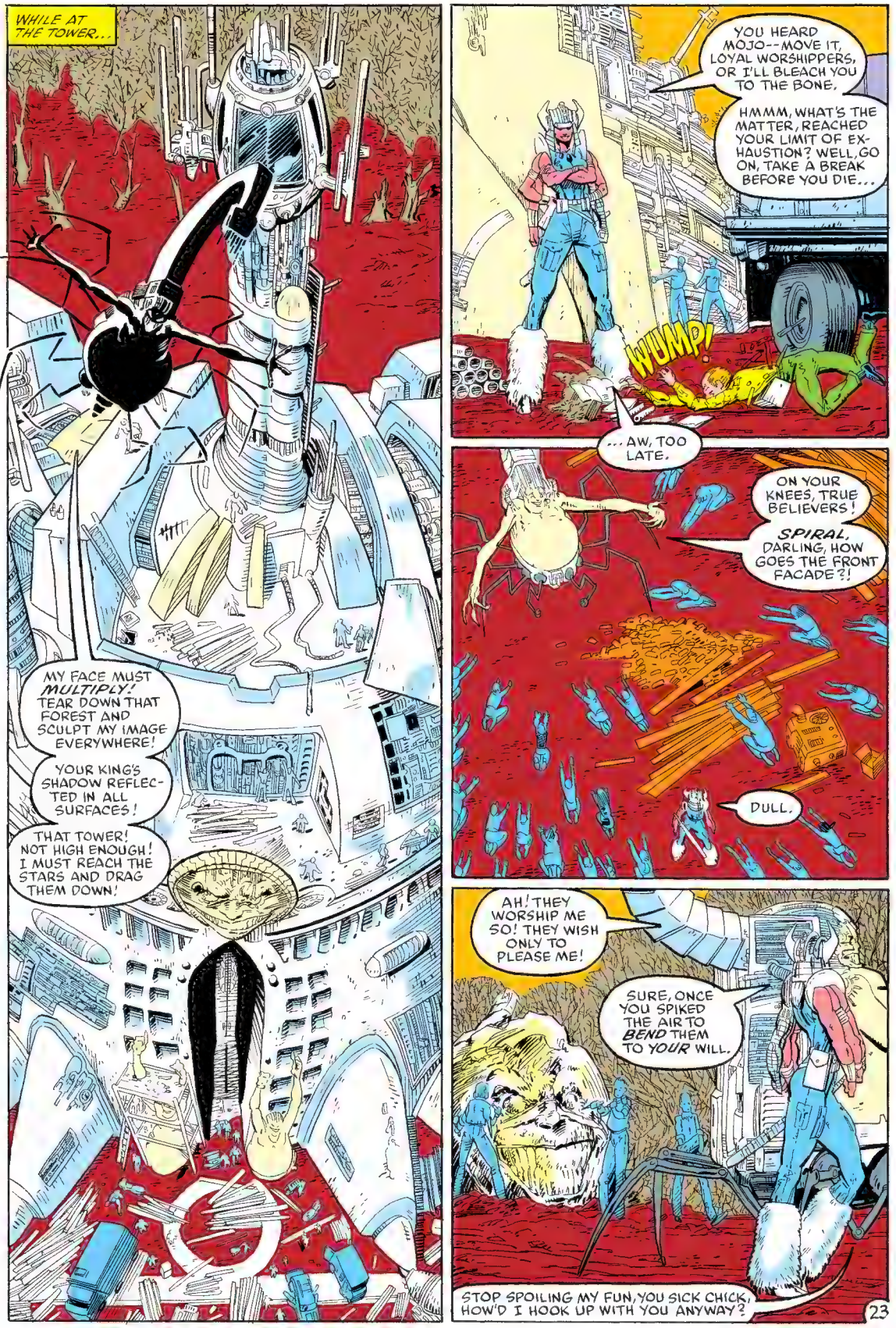

HE SAID TO PICK IT UP BY THE *NOSE...*


...AND PUT ONE END TO MY MOUTH AND ONE END TO MY EAR...
...MATCH THE NUMBERS... HEY! IT'S TALKIN' TO ME! LIKE MUSIC!

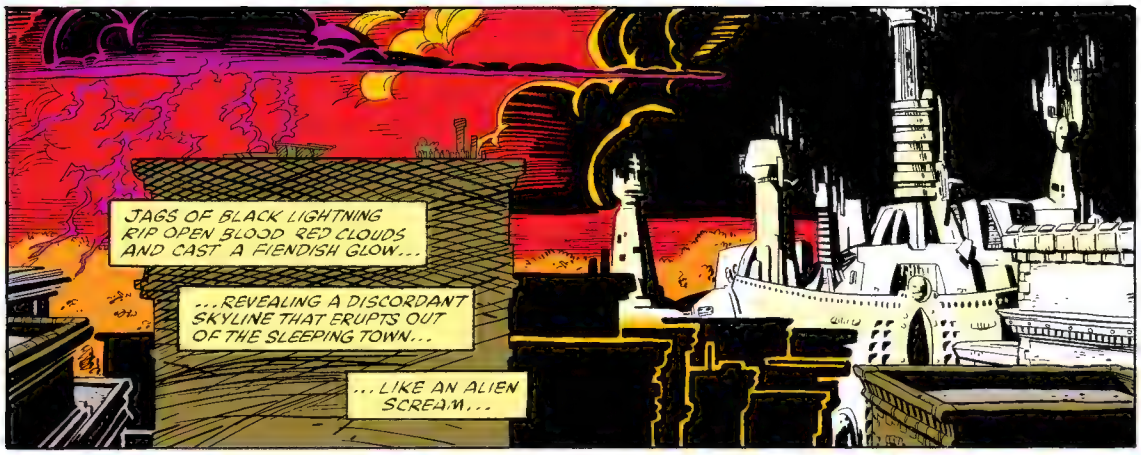

IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK CITY'S GREENWICH VILLAGE...
...IS A HOUSE. AND IN THE HEART OF THAT HOUSE...
IS THE SACRED SANCTUM SANCTORUM...
OF *DOCTOR STRANGE, UNMITIGATED MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!*

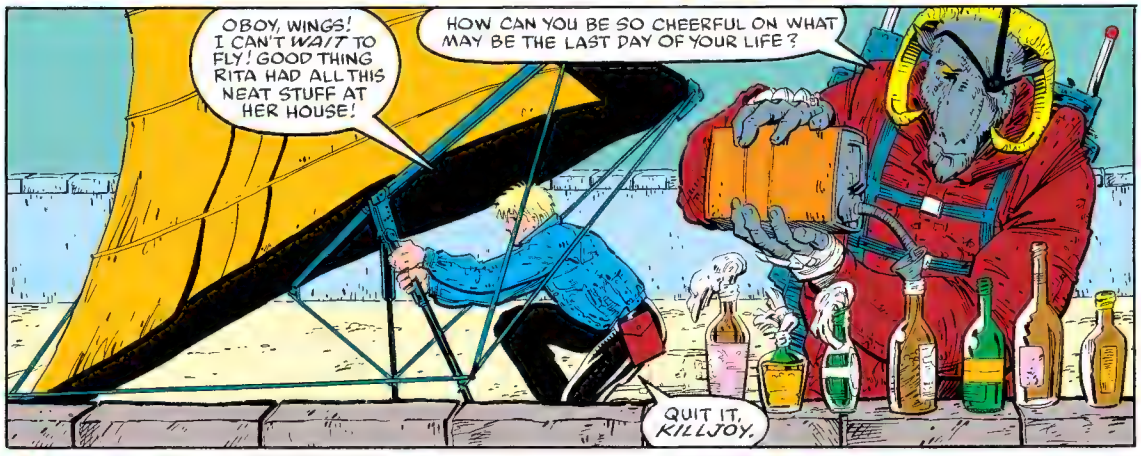
YER CRACKERS, POLLY, CRACKERS! BRAK!
IT SEEMS THE BIRD HAS RECOVERED, MASTER.
YES, YES. MAKE CERTAIN RITA BREATHES IN THOSE HERBS, WONG. BETWEEN YOUR EASTERN MEDICINE AND MY WESTERN...HER PULSE IS STEADY, HER AURA STRONG.
HER AURA IS MORE THAN STRONG--THERE ARE EMANATIONS THAT IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT SHE SURVIVE!
STILL NO RESPONSE. HER MIND REMAINS SHUT DOWN!
LOCKED AWAY IN HER UNCONSCIOUS, AND SHE CANNOT HEAR OUR CALLS!
BZZZT
BZZZT
BZZZT

IT MUST BE HIM.
COLLECT FROM MR. LONG-SHOT, WILL YOU ACCEPT?
YES. LONGSHOT?
IT'S TALKIN'! DOC STRANGE IS IN THERE!
ANSWER IT...I MEAN HIM.
DOCTOR STRANGE! WE FOUND MOJO--AND SPIRAL! SHE SAID THAT HE'S BUILDING A TOWER, TO ATTRACT WORSHIPPERS!
AND WHILE HE DOES IT, HIS POWER IS IN THE BUILDING!
HMMM...HE'S EXTENDING HIS METAPHYSICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE. HE WILL BE WEAK UNTIL IT ATTRACTS MORE WORSHIPPERS!
YEAH, WHAT IF WE ATTACK THE BUILDING, BREAK IT DOWN...
LONGSHOT...
RITA! SHE SPEAKS!
LONGSHOT...
WOULD THAT WEAKEN HIM?! I WANT TO TRY!
STRANGE? ARE YOU THERE?
LONGSHOT...
RITA! IS THAT YOU? I NEED YOU, RITA! COME HELP ME!
SHE CRADLED THE PHONE AS IF IT WERE HER VERY LIFELINE!
I'M HERE, LONGSHOT, SO MOJO'S CONSTRUCTED AN ANTENNA TO THE GODS--A TOWER OF BABBLE! DESTROY IT, SON, IF YOU CAN!
TO HURT IT WILL BE AS IF YOU ARE BREAKING OFF HIS LIMBS!
HEY, DOC... IS SHE...?
SHE'LL BE FINE... NOW.
TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE! GET STARTED, I'LL JOIN YOU SOON.

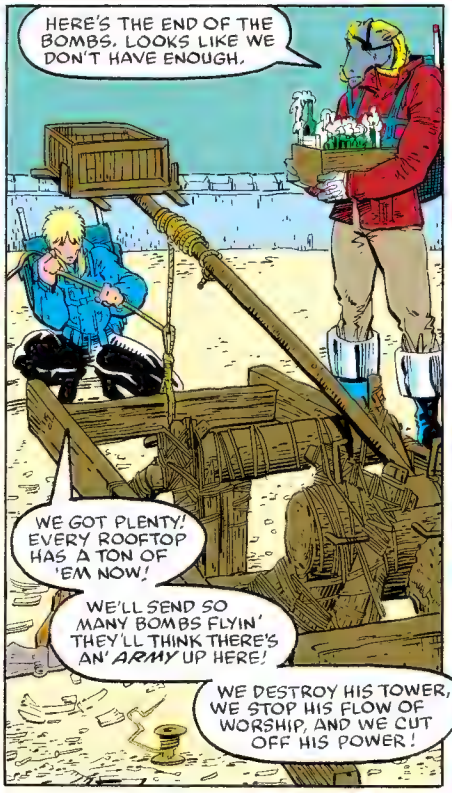

WHILE AT THE TOWER...
MY FACE MUST MULTIPLY! TEAR DOWN THAT FOREST AND SCULPT MY IMAGE EVERYWHERE!
YOUR KING'S SHADOW REFLECTED IN ALL SURFACES!
THAT TOWER! NOT HIGH ENOUGH! I MUST REACH THE STARS AND DRAG THEM DOWN!
YOU HEARD MOJO--MOVE IT, LOYAL WORSHIPPERS, OR I'LL BLEACH YOU TO THE BONE.
HMMM, WHAT'S THE MATTER, REACHED YOUR LIMIT OF EXHAUSTION? WELL, GO ON, TAKE A BREAK BEFORE YOU DIE...
WUMP!
...AW, TOO LATE.
ON YOUR KNEES, TRUE BELIEVERS!
SPIRAL, DARLING, HOW GOES THE FRONT FACADE?!
DULL.
AH! THEY WORSHIP ME SO! THEY WISH ONLY TO PLEASE ME!
SURE, ONCE YOU SPIKED THE AIR TO BEND THEM TO YOUR WILL.
STOP SPOILING MY FUN, YOU SICK CHICK, HOW'D I HOOK UP WITH YOU ANYWAY?

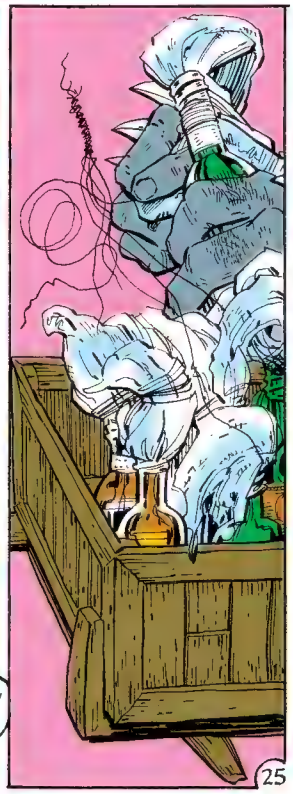
WHAT'S THIS!? THEY SCULPT MY FACE IN STONE! THEY RIDICULE MY IMAGE! HOW DARE THEY!
HOW DARE THEY NOT, WHEN YOU ORDERED IT DONE! "A THOUSAND FACES, ALL MINE" YOU SAID.
I DID NOT! THEY MOCK ME! I DON'T WANT MY FACE FROZEN IN STONE! IT CAN'T BREATHE!
I'LL SUCK AWAY THEIR AIR--AND SEE HOW THEY LIKE IT!
FFFZZZZZZSSTT
OH, GROSS. I CAN'T WATCH THIS!
TO DUST THEN!
WHAT A PRETTY SUNSET. HOW LOVELY THE COLORS THAT CARESS THIS PLANET.
I OWN THAT SUN, DON'T I?
SURE, MOJO.
YES! YES! I OWN THE SUN. I MUST HAVE IT BROUGHT DOWN CLOSER, SO IT SHINES ONLY ON MY SHRINE.
OKAY, RIGHT AWAY, BOSS, I'LL YANK THE SUN OUT OF THE SKY FOR YOU.
GOODY! I'LL BE ATOP THE TOWER, PONTIFICATING, IF YOU NEED ME.

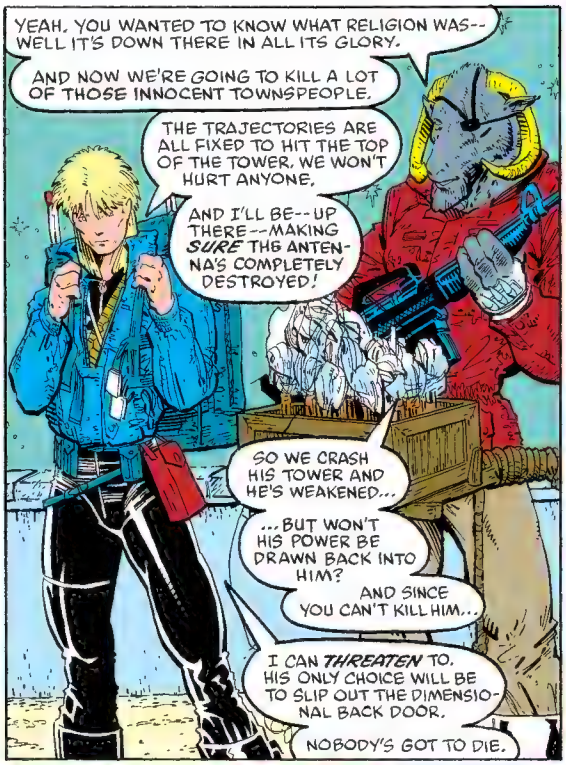

JAGS OF BLACK LIGHTNING RIP OPEN BLOOD RED CLOUDS AND CAST A FIENDISH GLOW...
...REVEALING A DISCORDANT SKYLINE THAT ERUPTS OUT OF THE SLEEPING TOWN...
...LIKE AN ALIEN SCREAM...


OBOY, WINGS! I CAN'T *WAIT* TO FLY! GOOD THING RITA HAD ALL THIS NEAT STUFF AT HER HOUSE!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CHEERFUL ON WHAT MAY BE THE LAST DAY OF YOUR LIFE?
QUIT IT, *KILLJOY.*

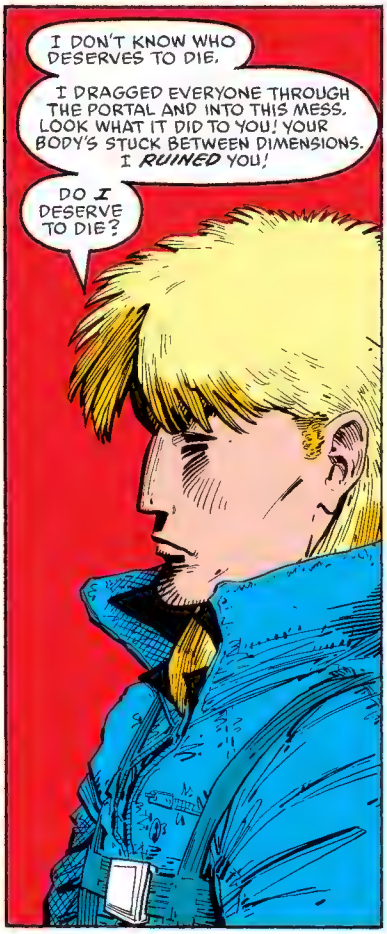
YOU GOT A REAL *DEATH FIXATION.*
WHY NOT? I'VE BEEN *DYING* SINCE I WAS BORN. YOU TOO.
OH, YEAH? THE WAY I SEE IT YOU'RE EITHER DYING OR YOU'RE *LIVING.*
YOUR CHOICE--
--WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE LIVING, QUARK? WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU.

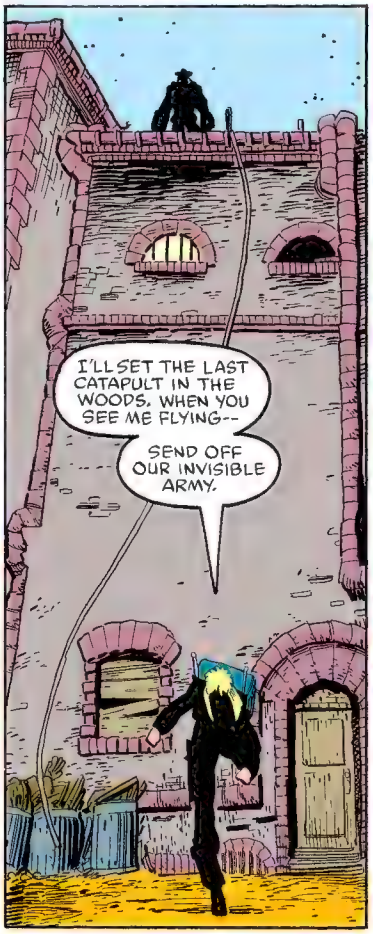

HERE'S THE END OF THE BOMBS. LOOKS LIKE WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH.
WE GOT PLENTY! EVERY ROOFTOP HAS A TON OF 'EM NOW!
WE'LL SEND SO MANY BOMBS FLYIN' THEY'LL THINK THERE'S AN' *ARMY* UP HERE!
WE DESTROY HIS TOWER, WE STOP HIS FLOW OF WORSHIP, AND WE CUT OFF HIS POWER!



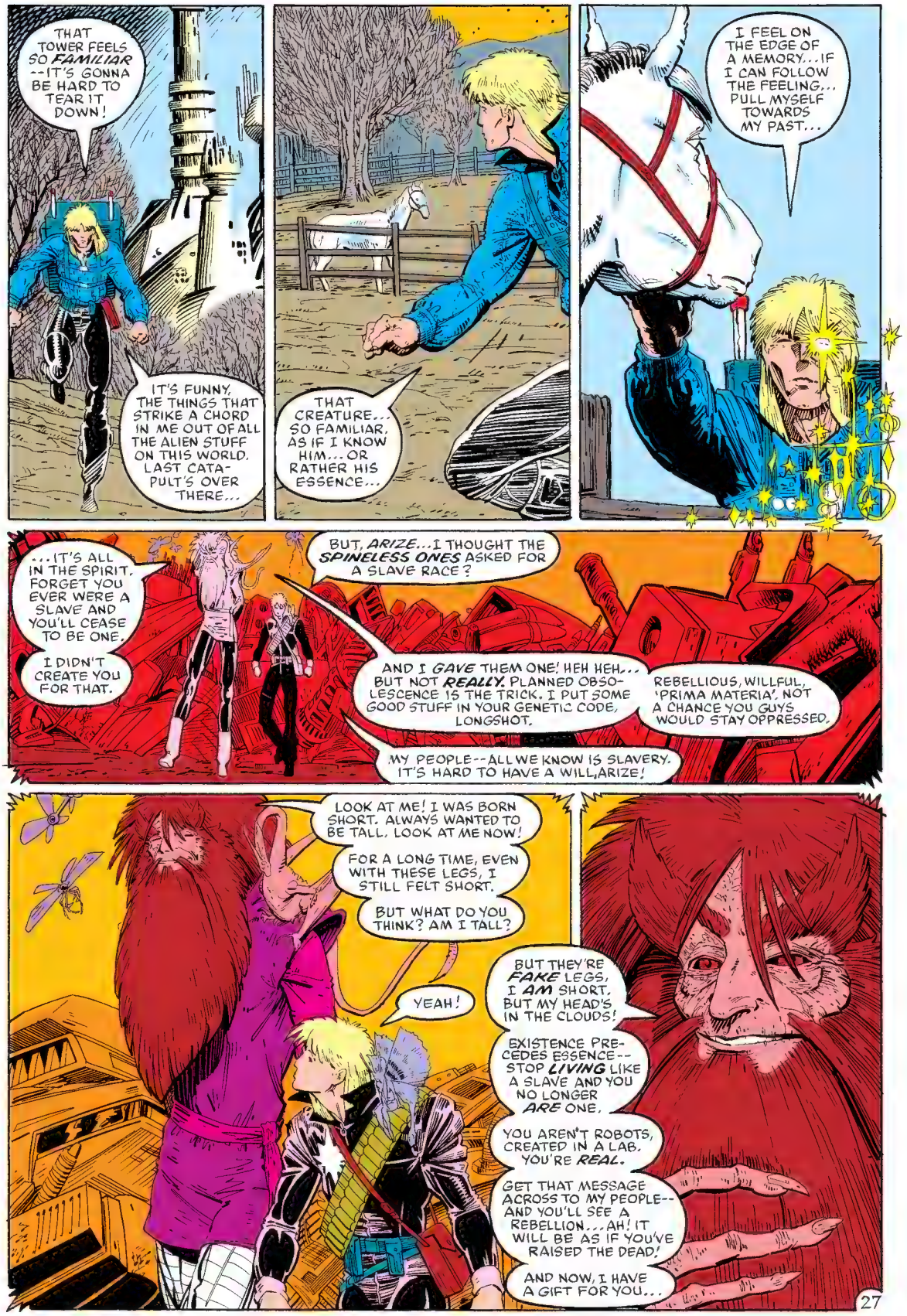

YEAH, YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHAT RELIGION WAS--WELL IT'S DOWN THERE IN ALL ITS GLORY.
AND NOW WE'RE GOING TO KILL A LOT OF THOSE INNOCENT TOWNSPEOPLE.
THE TRAJECTORIES ARE ALL FIXED TO HIT THE TOP OF THE TOWER. WE WON'T HURT ANYONE.
AND I'LL BE--UP THERE--MAKING SURE THE ANTENNA'S COMPLETELY DESTROYED!
SO WE CRASH HIS TOWER AND HE'S WEAKENED...
...BUT WON'T HIS POWER BE DRAWN BACK INTO HIM?
AND SINCE YOU CAN'T KILL HIM...
I CAN THREATEN TO. HIS ONLY CHOICE WILL BE TO SLIP OUT THE DIMENSIONAL BACK DOOR.
NOBODY'S GOT TO DIE.

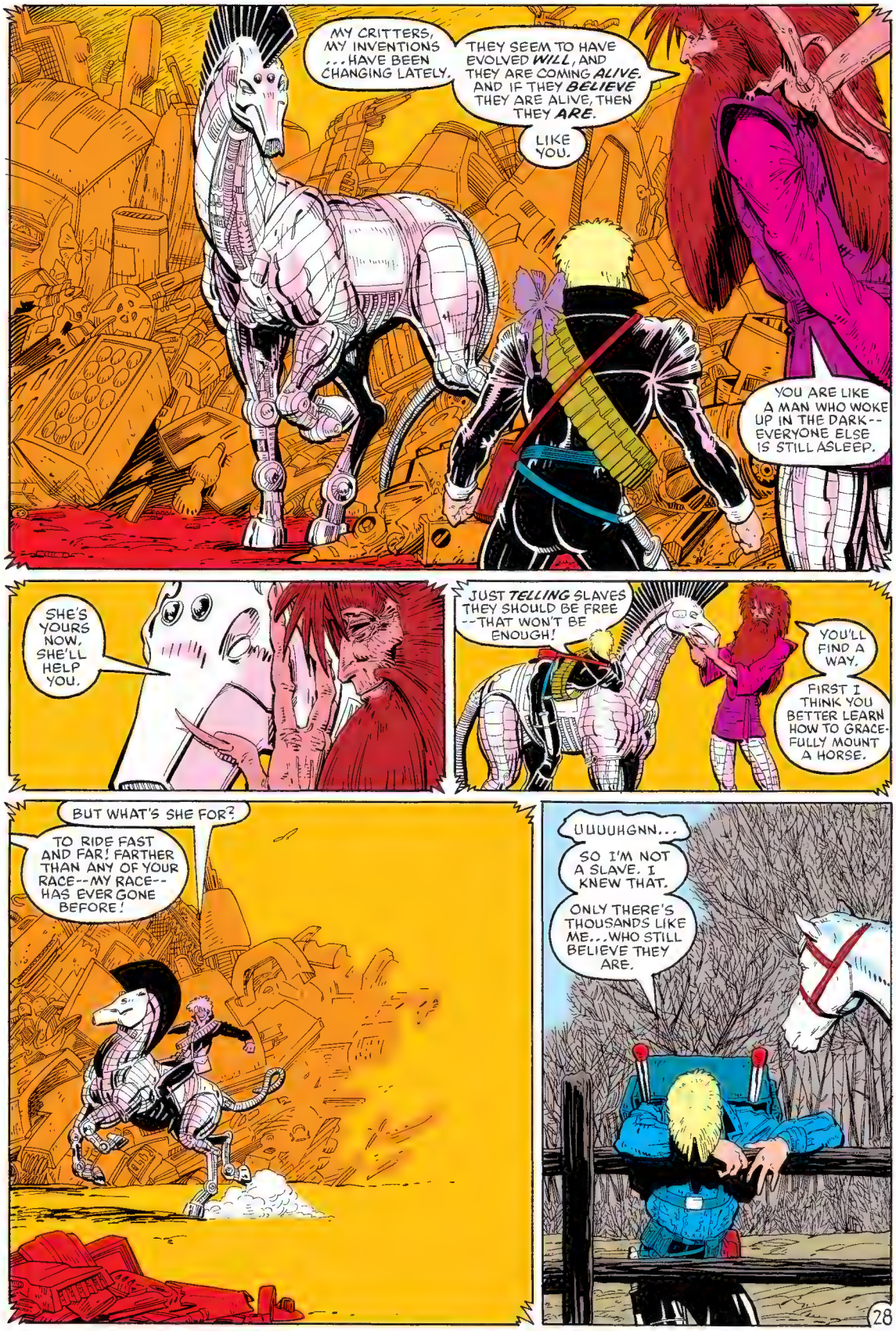
EVEN IF THEY DESERVE IT?


I DON'T KNOW WHO DESERVES TO DIE.
I DRAGGED EVERYONE THROUGH THE PORTAL AND INTO THIS MESS. LOOK WHAT IT DID TO YOU! YOUR BODY'S STUCK BETWEEN DIMENSIONS. I RUINED YOU!
DO I DESERVE TO DIE?

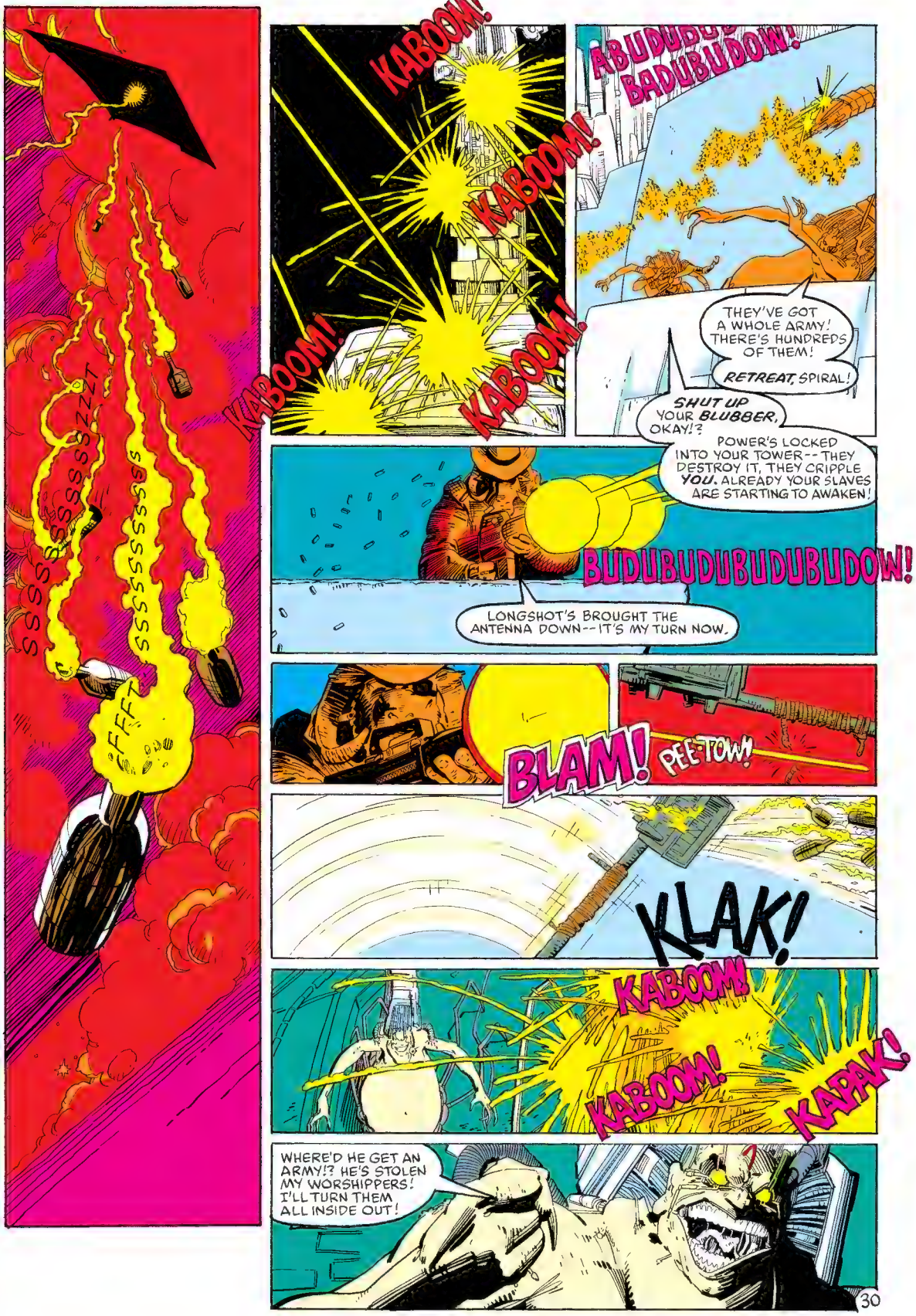

I'LL SET THE LAST CATAPULT IN THE WOODS. WHEN YOU SEE ME FLYING--
SEND OFF OUR INVISIBLE ARMY.

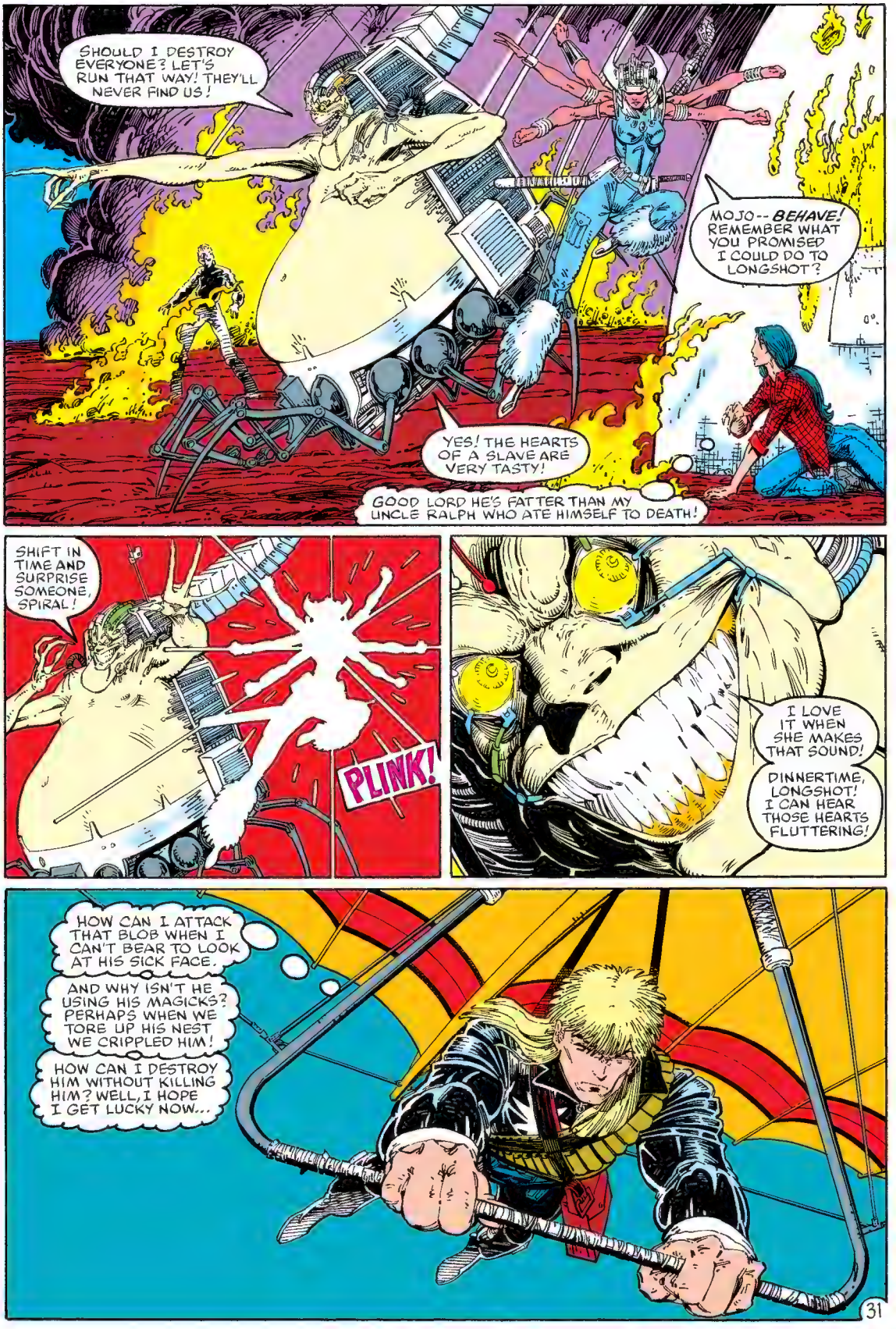
I'LL BE READY.
TODAY'S A FINE DAY TO DO IT--NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT I AM--
BECAUSE IF WE WIN TODAY, LONGSHOT, AND YOU SAVE THESE PEOPLE, THEY'LL PUT ME IN A PEN WITH THE ANIMALS.
I'D RATHER DIE.

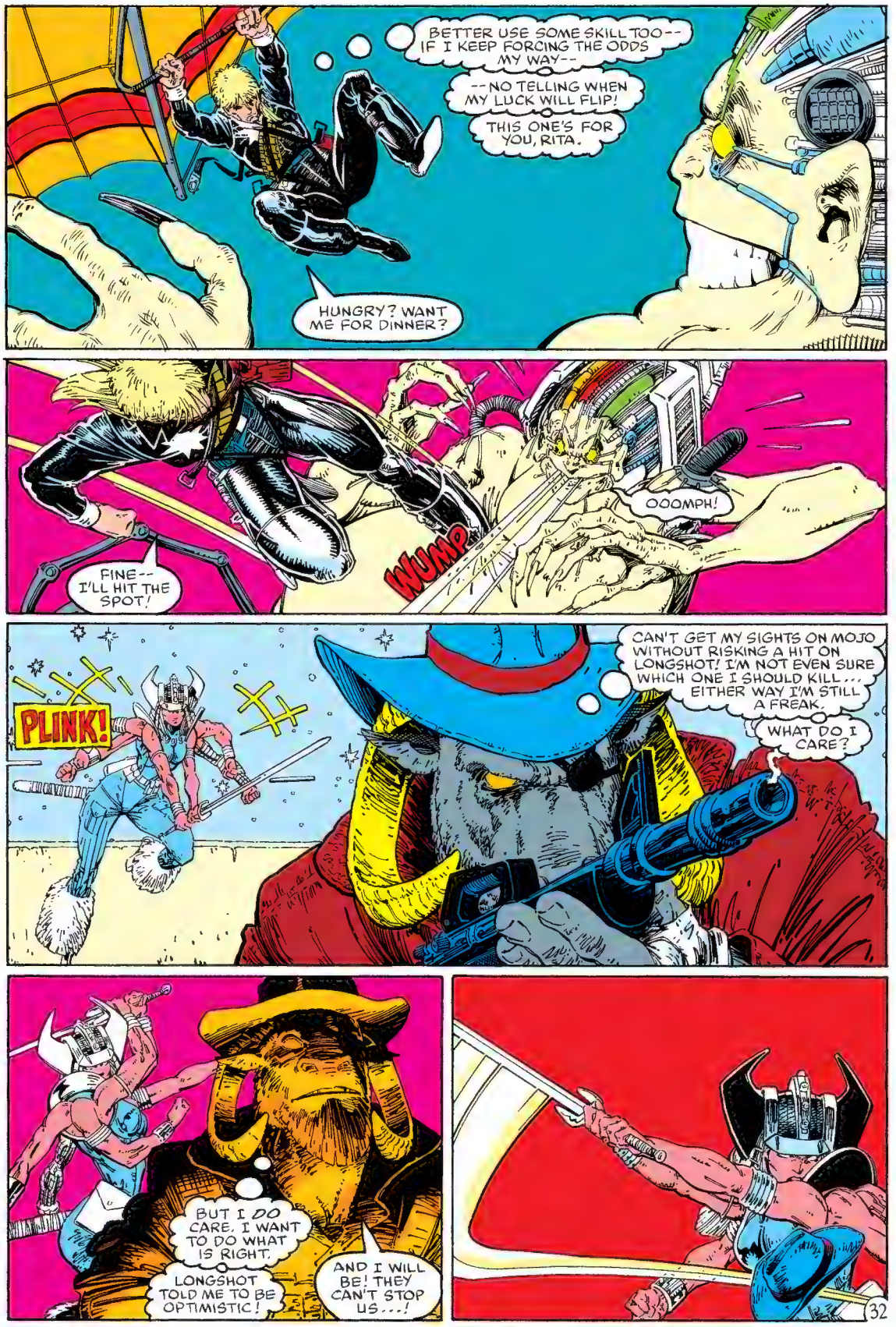

THAT TOWER FEELS SO FAMILIAR --IT'S GONNA BE HARD TO TEAR IT DOWN!
IT'S FUNNY, THE THINGS THAT STRIKE A CHORD IN ME OUT OF ALL THE ALIEN STUFF ON THIS WORLD. LAST CATA-PULT'S OVER THERE...
THAT CREATURE... SO FAMILIAR, AS IF I KNOW HIM... OR RATHER HIS ESSENCE...
I FEEL ON THE EDGE OF A MEMORY... IF I CAN FOLLOW THE FEELING... PULL MYSELF TOWARDS MY PAST...
...IT'S ALL IN THE SPIRIT. FORGET YOU EVER WERE A SLAVE AND YOU'LL CEASE TO BE ONE.
I DIDN'T CREATE YOU FOR THAT.
BUT, ARIZE... I THOUGHT THE SPINELESS ONES ASKED FOR A SLAVE RACE?
AND I GAVE THEM ONE! HEH HEH... BUT NOT REALLY. PLANNED OBSO-LESCENCE IS THE TRICK. I PUT SOME GOOD STUFF IN YOUR GENETIC CODE, LONGSHOT.
REBELLIOUS, WILLFUL, 'PRIMA MATERIA'. NOT A CHANCE YOU GUYS WOULD STAY OPPRESSED.
MY PEOPLE--ALL WE KNOW IS SLAVERY. IT'S HARD TO HAVE A WILL, ARIZE!
LOOK AT ME! I WAS BORN SHORT. ALWAYS WANTED TO BE TALL. LOOK AT ME NOW!
FOR A LONG TIME, EVEN WITH THESE LEGS, I STILL FELT SHORT.
BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK? AM I TALL?
YEAH!
BUT THEY'RE FAKE LEGS, I AM SHORT. BUT MY HEAD'S IN THE CLOUDS!
EXISTENCE PRE-CEDES ESSENCE -- STOP LIVING LIKE A SLAVE AND YOU NO LONGER ARE ONE.
YOU AREN'T ROBOTS, CREATED IN A LAB. YOU'RE REAL.
GET THAT MESSAGE ACROSS TO MY PEOPLE-- AND YOU'LL SEE A REBELLION... AH! IT WILL BE AS IF YOU'VE RAISED THE DEAD!
AND NOW, I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU...


MY CRITTERS, MY INVENTIONS ...HAVE BEEN CHANGING LATELY.
THEY SEEM TO HAVE EVOLVED WILL, AND THEY ARE COMING ALIVE. AND IF THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE ALIVE, THEN THEY ARE.
LIKE YOU.
YOU ARE LIKE A MAN WHO WOKE UP IN THE DARK-- EVERYONE ELSE IS STILL ASLEEP.
SHE'S YOURS NOW. SHE'LL HELP YOU.
JUST TELLING SLAVES THEY SHOULD BE FREE --THAT WON'T BE ENOUGH!
YOU'LL FIND A WAY.
FIRST I THINK YOU BETTER LEARN HOW TO GRACE-FULLY MOUNT A HORSE.
BUT WHAT'S SHE FOR?
TO RIDE FAST AND FAR! FARTHER THAN ANY OF YOUR RACE--MY RACE-- HAS EVER GONE BEFORE!
UUUUHGNN...
SO I'M NOT A SLAVE. I KNEW THAT.
ONLY THERE'S THOUSANDS LIKE ME...WHO STILL BELIEVE THEY ARE.

IF THEY COULD SEE THIS PLANET, FULL OF BEINGS JUST LIKE--LIKE MOST OF US...
...ONLY THE PEOPLE HERE ARE FREE, THEY RULE!
ARIZE SAID I'D FIND A WAY. I GUESS I HAVE.
I'LL GO BACK TO MY DIMENSION AND BRING ALL MY PEOPLE HERE!
MOJO--HE MUST BE ONE OF THE OPPRESSORS!
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM AFTER ALL...
NEARBY...
WE'RE GETTING CLOSER TO THE SUN! HIGHER--I CAN ALMOST TOUCH IT!
SO WHAT, WHAT'S THE POINT?
LET'S GET SOME PRESS AND MEDIA IN HERE SO WE CAN BEGIN MANIPULATING THE MASSES.
HOOK INTO THE GLOBAL VILLAGE!
REACHING FOR THE SUN DOESN'T MAKE A GOD, IT MELTS ONE.
WHO'S MELTING? SPIRAL, I'M MELTING?!
SHUT UP, OR I'LL STICK YOUR LEG IN A POWER OUTLET--AND RUN SOME HIGH VOLTAGE THROUGH YOUR BRAINWIRES.
OOOOH, I'LL BE A HIGH VOLTAGE MESSIAH!
WELL, LOOK WHO'S BACK! REMEMBER, MOJO, DON'T UNLEASH YOUR FULL POWER TILL I'VE HAD MY WAY WITH HIM!
LONGSHOT! HE CAN'T ESCAPE THE ELECTRIC MESSIAH!
HE'S GROWN WINGS! HE'S AFTER MY SUN! STOP HIM!

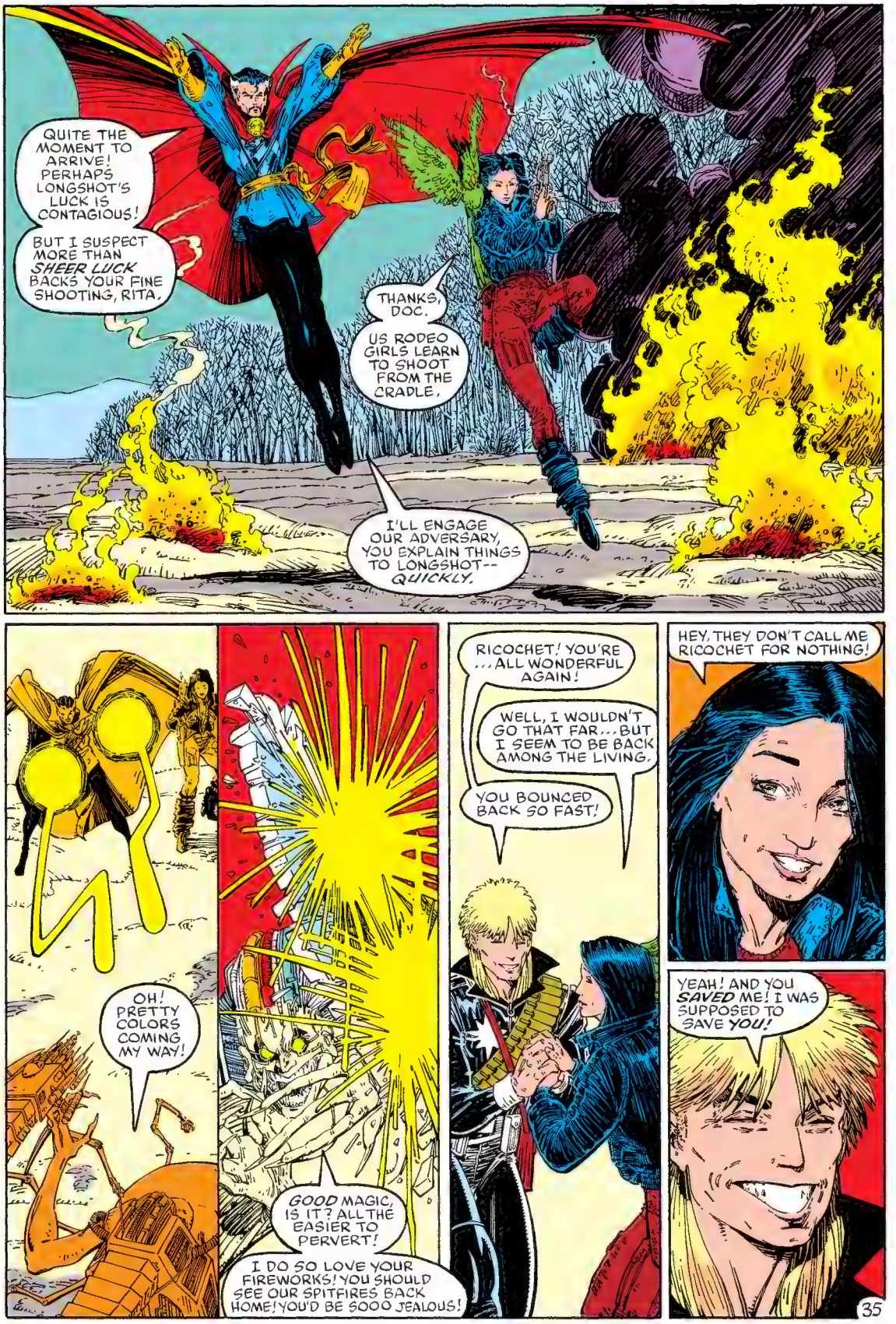

SSSSSSSSSSSSSZZZT
FFFFT SSSSSSSSSSSS
KABOOM!
KABOOM!
KABOOM!
KABOOM!
ABUDUDUDUDOW! BADUBUDOW!
THEY'VE GOT A WHOLE ARMY! THERE'S HUNDREDS OF THEM!
RETREAT, SPIRAL!
SHUT UP YOUR BLUBBER, OKAY!?
POWER'S LOCKED INTO YOUR TOWER-- THEY DESTROY IT, THEY CRIPPLE YOU. ALREADY YOUR SLAVES ARE STARTING TO AWAKEN!
BUDUBUDUBUDUBUDOW!
LONGSHOT'S BROUGHT THE ANTENNA DOWN--IT'S MY TURN NOW.
BLAM!
PEE-TOW!
KLAK!
KABOOM!
KABOOM!
KAPAK!
WHERE'D HE GET AN ARMY!? HE'S STOLEN MY WORSHIPPERS! I'LL TURN THEM ALL INSIDE OUT!

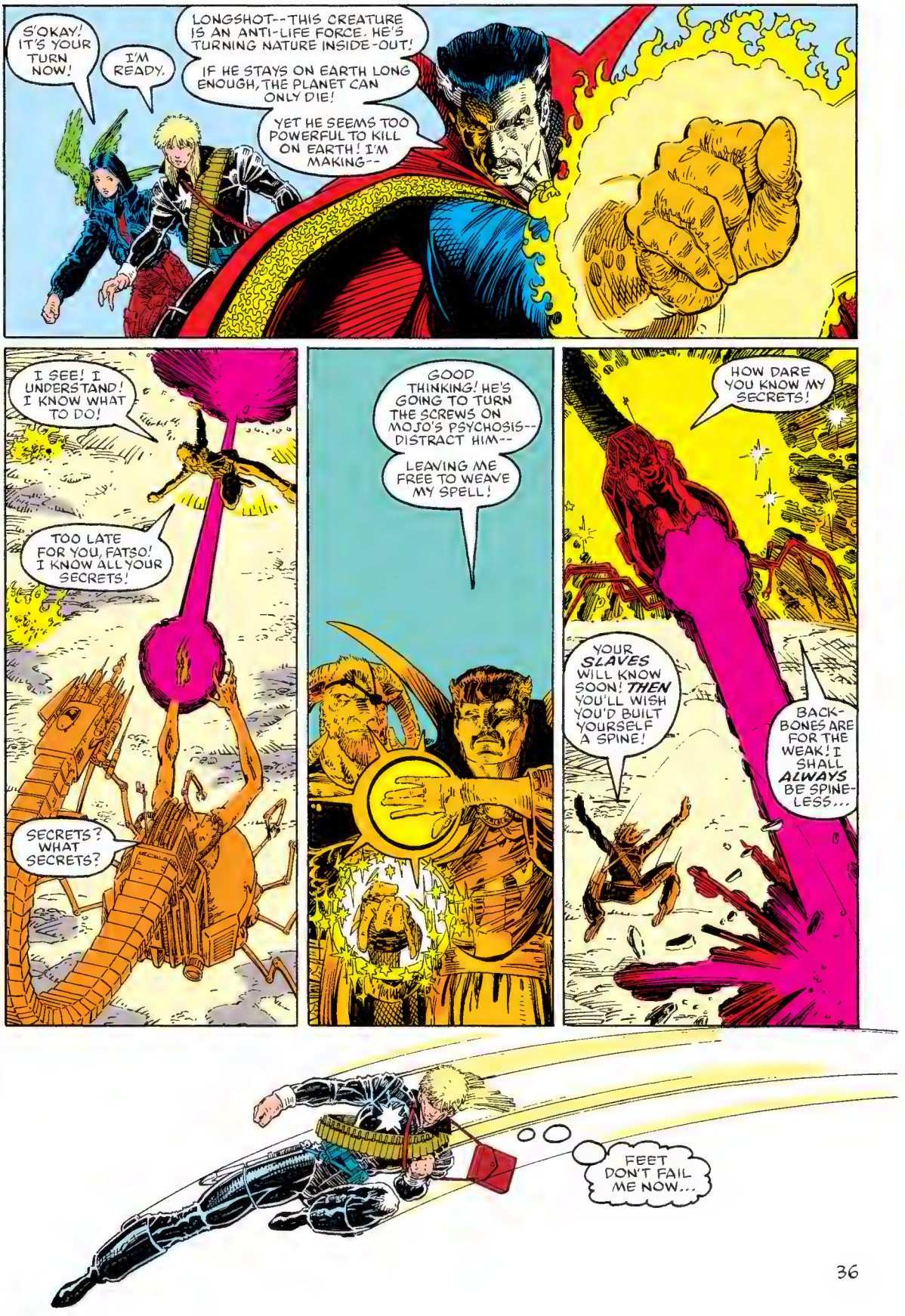

SHOULD I DESTROY EVERYONE? LET'S RUN THAT WAY! THEY'LL NEVER FIND US!
MOJO-- BEHAVE! REMEMBER WHAT YOU PROMISED I COULD DO TO LONGSHOT?
YES! THE HEARTS OF A SLAVE ARE VERY TASTY!
GOOD LORD HE'S FATTER THAN MY UNCLE RALPH WHO ATE HIMSELF TO DEATH!
SHIFT IN TIME AND SURPRISE SOMEONE, SPIRAL!
PLINK!
I LOVE IT WHEN SHE MAKES THAT SOUND!
DINNERTIME, LONGSHOT! I CAN HEAR THOSE HEARTS FLUTTERING!
HOW CAN I ATTACK THAT BLOB WHEN I CAN'T BEAR TO LOOK AT HIS SICK FACE.
AND WHY ISN'T HE USING HIS MAGICKS? PERHAPS WHEN WE TORE UP HIS NEST WE CRIPPLED HIM!
HOW CAN I DESTROY HIM WITHOUT KILLING HIM? WELL, I HOPE I GET LUCKY NOW...

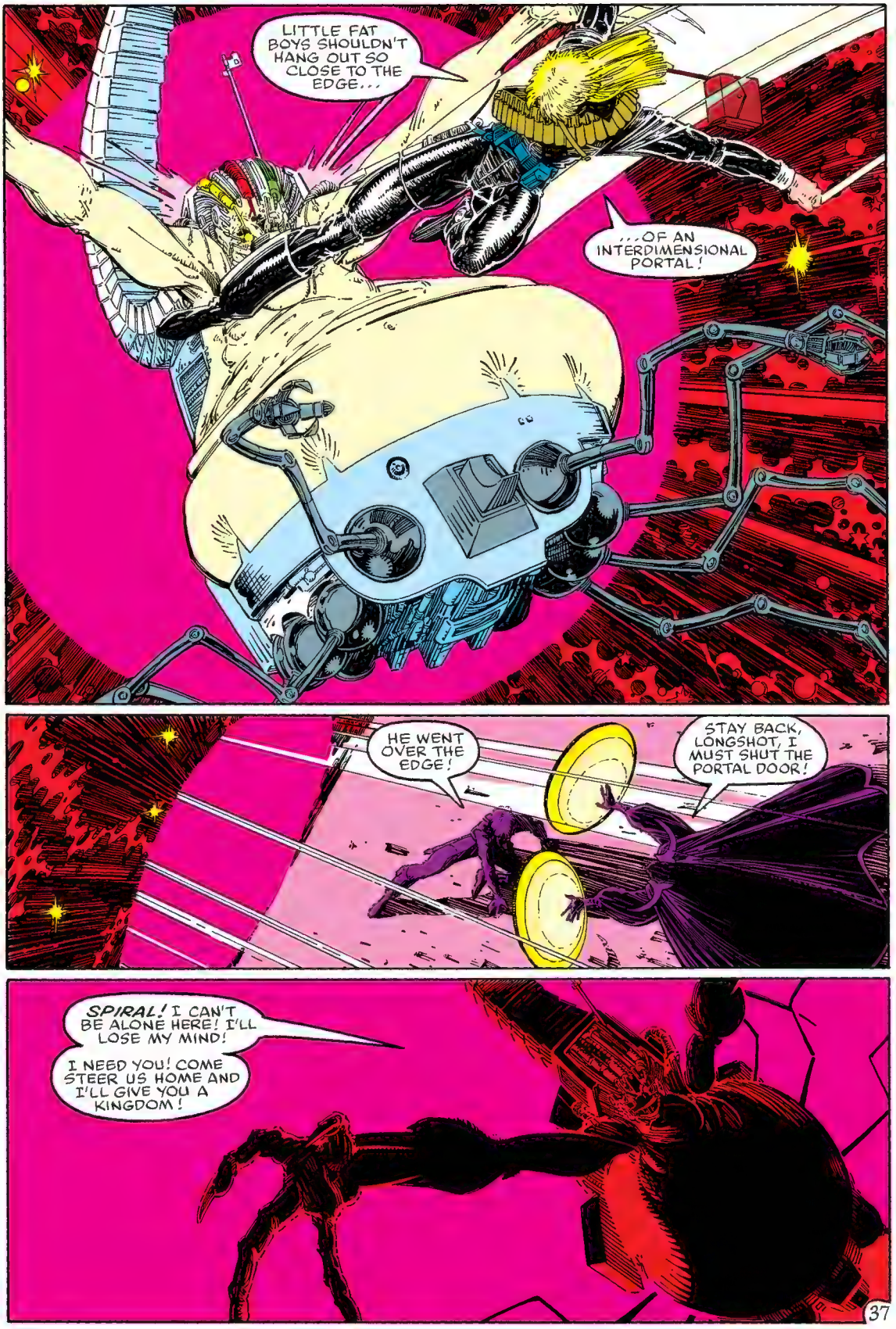

BETTER USE SOME SKILL TOO-- IF I KEEP FORCING THE ODDS MY WAY--
--NO TELLING WHEN MY LUCK WILL FLIP!
THIS ONE'S FOR YOU, RITA.
HUNGRY? WANT ME FOR DINNER?
OOOMPH!
WUMP
FINE-- I'LL HIT THE SPOT!
PLINK!
CAN'T GET MY SIGHTS ON MOJO WITHOUT RISKING A HIT ON LONGSHOT! I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHICH ONE I SHOULD KILL... EITHER WAY I'M STILL A FREAK.
WHAT DO I CARE?
BUT I DO CARE. I WANT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.
LONGSHOT TOLD ME TO BE OPTIMISTIC!
AND I WILL BE! THEY CAN'T STOP US...!

YOU FORGOT I'M NEITHER HERE NOR THERE!
WHICH MEANS I CAN BE ANYWHERE!
OBOY! I'LL FRY YOU BOTH AT ONCE.
OOH! SHE DID IT AGAIN!
PLINK!
BOOPH!
YOU PROMISED HIM TO ME, MOJO!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, SPIRAL? WHAT WENT ON, ON THAT OTHER WORLD?
DID SOMETHING GO ON, BETWEEN US?
NO!
I THINK, YES!
BUT FOR MY SAKE I HOPE NOT, SPIRAL--
--TO KNOW YOU IS TO BE DEGRADED.

NOW LET'S SORT THIS OUT--
--BEFORE SOMEONE DIES!
OKAY!
BAM!
THUD!
STEAM BATH!
OKAY, SPIRAL, WHILE THEY'RE STUNNED, SERVE ME THEIR ALTRUISTIC HEARTS!
FOR ONCE, MOJO, WE WANT THE SAME THING!
KABLAM!
GOOD SHOOTIN'!
MOJO! SHE HIT ME!

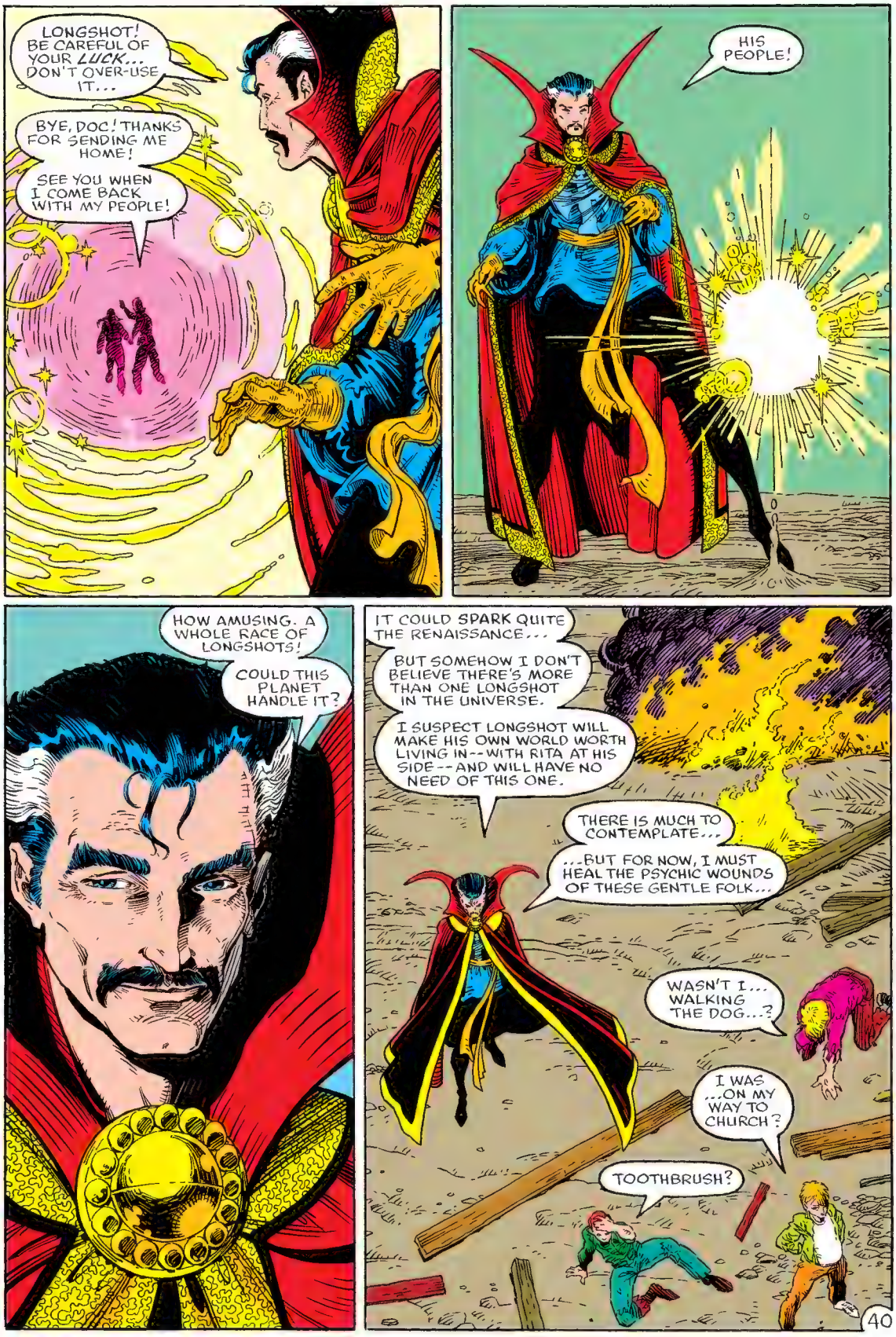

QUITE THE MOMENT TO ARRIVE! PERHAPS LONGSHOT'S LUCK IS CONTAGIOUS!
BUT I SUSPECT MORE THAN *SHEER LUCK* BACKS YOUR FINE SHOOTING, RITA.
THANKS, DOC.
US RODEO GIRLS LEARN TO SHOOT FROM THE CRADLE.
I'LL ENGAGE OUR ADVERSARY, YOU EXPLAIN THINGS TO LONGSHOT-- *QUICKLY.*
OH! PRETTY COLORS COMING MY WAY!
GOOD MAGIC, IS IT? ALL THE EASIER TO PERVERT!
I DO SO LOVE YOUR FIREWORKS! YOU SHOULD SEE OUR SPITFIRES BACK HOME! YOU'D BE SOOO JEALOUS!
RICOCHET! YOU'RE ... ALL WONDERFUL AGAIN!
WELL, I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR... BUT I SEEM TO BE BACK AMONG THE LIVING.
YOU BOUNCED BACK SO FAST!
HEY, THEY DON'T CALL ME RICOCHET FOR NOTHING!
YEAH! AND YOU *SAVED* ME! I WAS SUPPOSED TO SAVE *YOU!*


S'OKAY! IT'S YOUR TURN NOW!
I'M READY.
LONGSHOT--THIS CREATURE IS AN ANTI-LIFE FORCE. HE'S TURNING NATURE INSIDE-OUT!
IF HE STAYS ON EARTH LONG ENOUGH, THE PLANET CAN ONLY DIE!
YET HE SEEMS TOO POWERFUL TO KILL ON EARTH! I'M MAKING--
I SEE! I UNDERSTAND! I KNOW WHAT TO DO!
TOO LATE FOR YOU, FATSO! I KNOW ALL YOUR SECRETS!
SECRETS? WHAT SECRETS?
GOOD THINKING! HE'S GOING TO TURN THE SCREWS ON MOJO'S PSYCHOSIS--DISTRACT HIM--
LEAVING ME FREE TO WEAVE MY SPELL!
HOW DARE YOU KNOW MY SECRETS!
YOUR SLAVES WILL KNOW SOON! THEN YOU'LL WISH YOU'D BUILT YOURSELF A SPINE!
BACK-BONES ARE FOR THE WEAK! I SHALL ALWAYS BE SPINE-LESS...
FEET DON'T FAIL ME NOW...

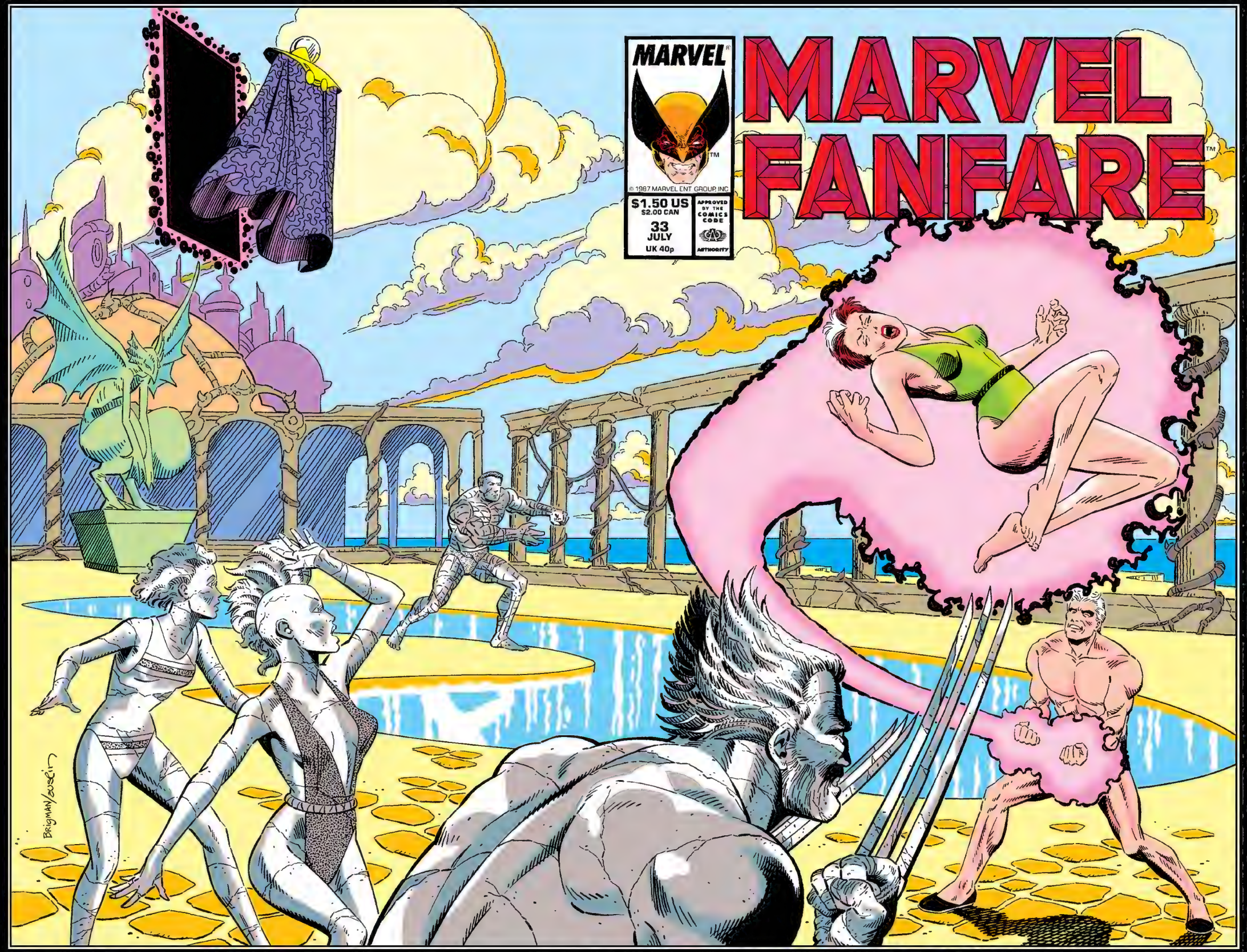

LITTLE FAT BOYS SHOULDN'T HANG OUT SO CLOSE TO THE EDGE...
...OF AN INTERDIMENSIONAL PORTAL!
HE WENT OVER THE EDGE!
STAY BACK, LONGSHOT, I MUST SHUT THE PORTAL DOOR!
SPIRAL! I CAN'T BE ALONE HERE! I'LL LOSE MY MIND!
I NEED YOU! COME STEER US HOME AND I'LL GIVE YOU A KINGDOM!

DON'T MOVE OR I'LL SHOOT AGAIN!
SHUT UP, HUMAN. IT'S A PLEASURE TO WATCH THAT BLOAT FLOAT AWAY.
THIS CHICK NEEDS SOME *DIRT* IN HER FACE.
SPIRAL! I'LL FIX YOUR ARMS! I'LL BUILD YOU YOUR OWN LONGSHOT TO PLAY WITH!
BRAK!
BLAM
NO! I CAN'T SEE!
STOP HER!
TOO LATE, SUCKERS! WE'VE GOT A KINGDOM TO RULE
GOODBYE, EVERYONE! I MUST GO AFTER THEM!
NO! YOU'LL GET LOST! YOU'LL DIE!
YOU'LL NEVER BE BACK...

I HAVE TO GO! WITH SPIRAL WITH HIM, MOJO WON'T BE LOST ANYMORE! HE'LL RETURN TO MY WORLD--AND MAY EVEN TRY TO COME BACK HERE!
I'M READY NOW... TO KILL HIM.
THEN I MUST GATHER MY PEOPLE--RAISE THEM FROM THE DEAD --AND BRING THEM TO THIS PLANET...
...WHERE THEY CAN BE FREE!
I MAY BE WALKING TO MY DOOM...BUT IF YOU CAN PUT UP WITH MY BAD MOODS...
...I'LL JOIN YOU!
GREAT! THE QUEST CAN USE YOU, QUARK!
HEY WHO'S YOUR HANDSOME FRIEND, LONGSHOT?
MAKE ROOM FOR ME, GUYS, I'M COMING TOO!
YOU'D NEVER SURVIVE!
I'M RICOCHET! SHE ALWAYS SURVIVES!
BESIDES, DON'T YOU NEED PROOF FOR YOUR PEOPLE?
BUT...THE TRAUMA OF A TIME-SPACE JAUNT COULD...
BUT NOTHING--I'LL SHUT MY EYES THIS TIME!
I'M LIVING PROOF THAT A RACE OF MAN EXISTS!
YOU'RE RIGHT--IF I DON'T HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE, THEY'LL THINK I'M NUTS!
WELL, THEY MAY ANYWAY, BUT...
YOU SURE YOU'RE READY ...YOU'LL BE RISKING... EVERYTHING...
THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT FUN!
YEAH!!


LONGSHOT! BE CAREFUL OF YOUR LUCK... DON'T OVER-USE IT...
BYE, DOC! THANKS FOR SENDING ME HOME!
SEE YOU WHEN I COME BACK WITH MY PEOPLE!
HIS PEOPLE!
HOW AMUSING. A WHOLE RACE OF LONGSHOTS!
COULD THIS PLANET HANDLE IT?
IT COULD SPARK QUITE THE RENAISSANCE...
BUT SOMEHOW I DON'T BELIEVE THERE'S MORE THAN ONE LONGSHOT IN THE UNIVERSE.
I SUSPECT LONGSHOT WILL MAKE HIS OWN WORLD WORTH LIVING IN--WITH RITA AT HIS SIDE--AND WILL HAVE NO NEED OF THIS ONE.
THERE IS MUCH TO CONTEMPLATE...
...BUT FOR NOW, I MUST HEAL THE PSYCHIC WOUNDS OF THESE GENTLE FOLK...
WASN'T I... WALKING THE DOG...?
I WAS ...ON MY WAY TO CHURCH?
TOOTHBRUSH?

YES. REPAIR THE DAMAGES...
CRACKERS CRACKERS RITA'S GONE CRACKERS...
HELLO, WIFFERDILL.
STUFF IT, POLLY!
THIS PLANET IS STRONG, AND NATURE'S A FEARSOME PROTECTOR
AND YET, AT THE SAME TIME, THIS ORB IS QUITE VULNERABLE.
MOMENTS LIKE THESE, I TRULY UNDERSTAND OUR FRAILTY. ONE INSTANT THE WORLD IS AT PEACE, THE NEXT A BEING LIKE MOJO REVERSES THE COURSE OF NATURE AND ALMOST DESTROYS US.
IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN, ANY SECOND.
BUT FOR NOW, THE FLOWERS BLOOM AGAIN. THE NATURAL WORLD WILL NOT BE DESTROYED, AFTER ALL.
AND PERHAPS--ANOTHER WORLD IS ABOUT TO BE SAVED!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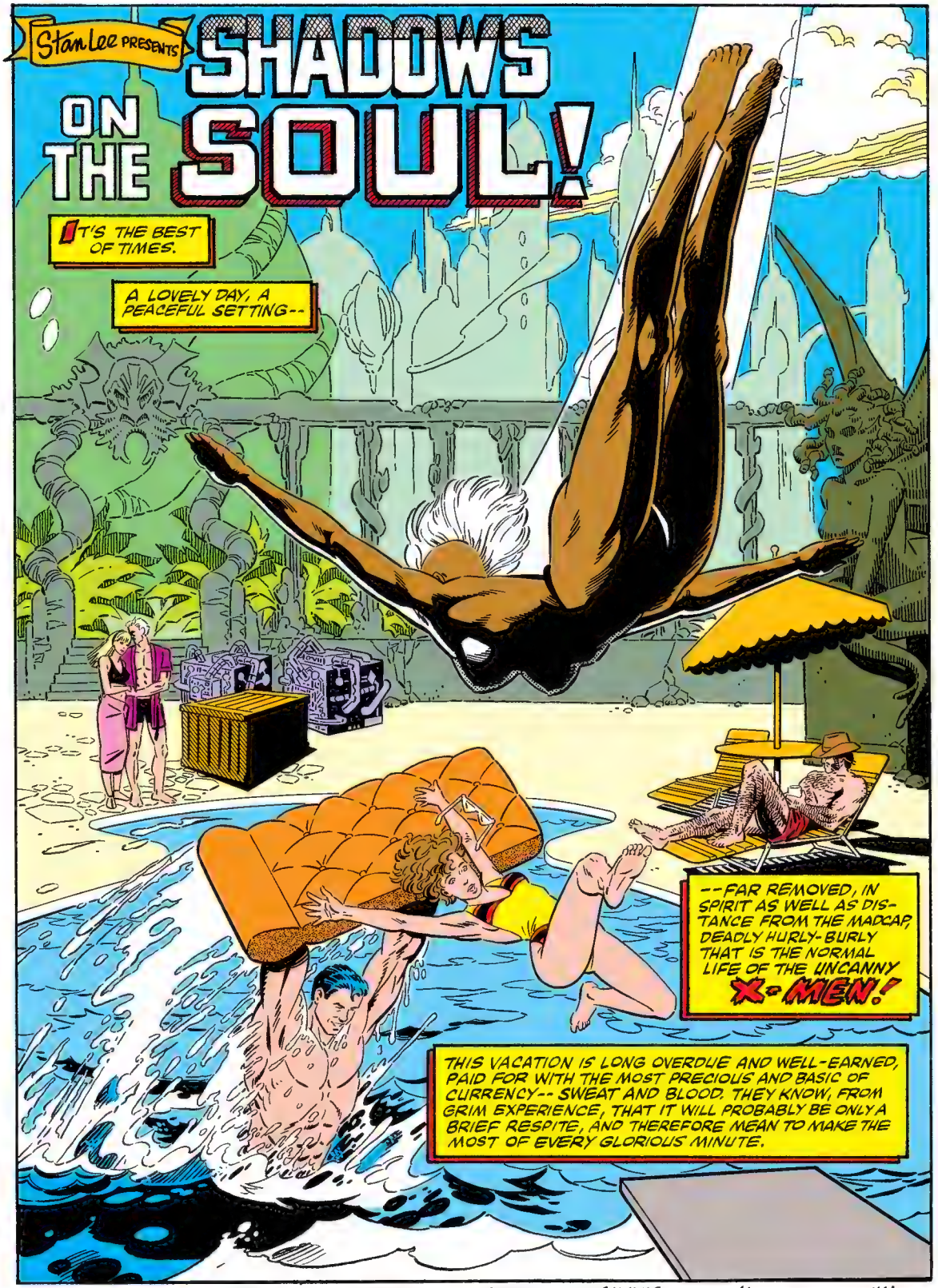
BRIGMAN/AUSTIN

Special Bonus: Originally slated for release in 1986, *Marvel Fanfare* #33 (July 1987) presented the tie-in comic for the cancelled X-Men installment of the *Questprobe* text adventure computer game.

EDITORI-AL
UH-OH, HOW DO I TALK MY WAY OUT OF THIS ONE?
NO WAY AROUND IT... GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO TRY ≥GULP≤
THE TRUTH!
WE'VE HAD LOTS OF DEBATES IN THE LETTER COLUMN OVER WHETHER WE SHOULD USE "INVENTORY" STORIES THAT WEREN'T ORIGINALLY DONE FOR FANFARE--
--SO OKAY, I ADMIT IT THIS ISSUE'S X-MEN JOB WAS DONE AS PART OF MARVEL'S "QUESTPROBE" SERIES.
BUT OUR READERS KEEP CLAMORING FOR X-MEN STORIES, SO WHEN I SAW THIS ONE LANGUISHING IN THE FILES...
I MEAN... CLAREMONT, BRIGMAN, AND AUSTIN... C'MON, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE? I KNOW MOST OF YOU WILL JUDGE IT ON ITS OWN MERITS--
--BUT A FEW OF YOU ARE GONNA AUTOMATICALLY SUBJECT ME TO SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGED LETTERS OF COMMENT!
BUT GO AHEAD, I'M READY FOR YOU--
--EVEN REAL SLINGS AND ARROWS COULDN'T HURT ME NOW!


Stan Lee presents
SHADOWS ON THE SOUL!
IT'S THE BEST OF TIMES.
A LOVELY DAY, A PEACEFUL SETTING--
--FAR REMOVED, IN SPIRIT AS WELL AS DISTANCE FROM THE MADCAP, DEADLY HURLY-BURLY THAT IS THE NORMAL LIFE OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN!
THIS VACATION IS LONG OVERDUE AND WELL-EARNED, PAID FOR WITH THE MOST PRECIOUS AND BASIC OF CURRENCY-- SWEAT AND BLOOD. THEY KNOW, FROM GRIM EXPERIENCE, THAT IT WILL PROBABLY BE ONLY A BRIEF RESPITE, AND THEREFORE MEAN TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY GLORIOUS MINUTE.

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER * JUNE BRIGMAN PENCILER * TERRY AUSTIN INKER * RICK PARKER LETTERER * GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST * AL MILGROM EDITOR * JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF

SPECIAL THANKS TO "QUESTPROBE" EDITOR BOB BUDIANSKY

THE ISLAND--NESTLED IN THE HEART OF THE INFAMOUS BERMUDA TRIANGLE--IS UNLISTED ON ANY CHART, ITS PRESENCE MASKED FROM PRYING EYES BOTH BY ITS OWN ELDRITCH NATURE AND AN ARRAY OF SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONIC DEFENSES.

IT IS OLDER THAN HUMAN CIVILIZATION--PERHAPS EVEN THAN THE RACE ITSELF--AND FOR UNCOUNTED EONS, LAY ABANDONED, DESOLATE, FORGOTTEN ON THE FLOOR OF THE ATLANTIC.

...UNTIL **MAGNETO**, MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM, RAISED IT TO THE SURFACE, TO SERVE AS HIS BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR AN ATTEMPTED CONQUEST OF THE EARTH.

A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN.

THE ARCH-VILLAIN HAS BECOME A HERO, AND HIS BITTEREST FOES, THE X-MEN--WHO DEFEATED HIM THAT DAY--ARE NOW, IF NOT QUITE HIS FRIENDS, THEN AT LEAST HIS ALLIES.

PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH, IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH TROUBLE...

...I'D APPRECIATE COLOSSUS'S HELP WITH THIS CRATE.

A PLEASURE, *TOVARISCH* MAGNETO.

A THOUGHT TRANSFORMS THE YOUNG RUSSIAN'S BODY FROM FLESH AND BLOOD TO SUPER-STRONG ORGANIC STEEL, AND OFF HE GOES...

I'VE MISSED YOU.

AND I YOU, LEE.

YOU SOUND SURPRISED.

I AM.

OHO? ASHAMED TO CARE FOR A "HUMAN," O CHAMPION OF MUTANTKIND, SELF-STYLED SAVIOR OF YOUR PEOPLE?

UNNERVED TO CARE AT ALL, IN THIS WAY, FOR ANYONE.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG, ALEYTYS. I NEVER THOUGHT TO BE SO BLESSED...

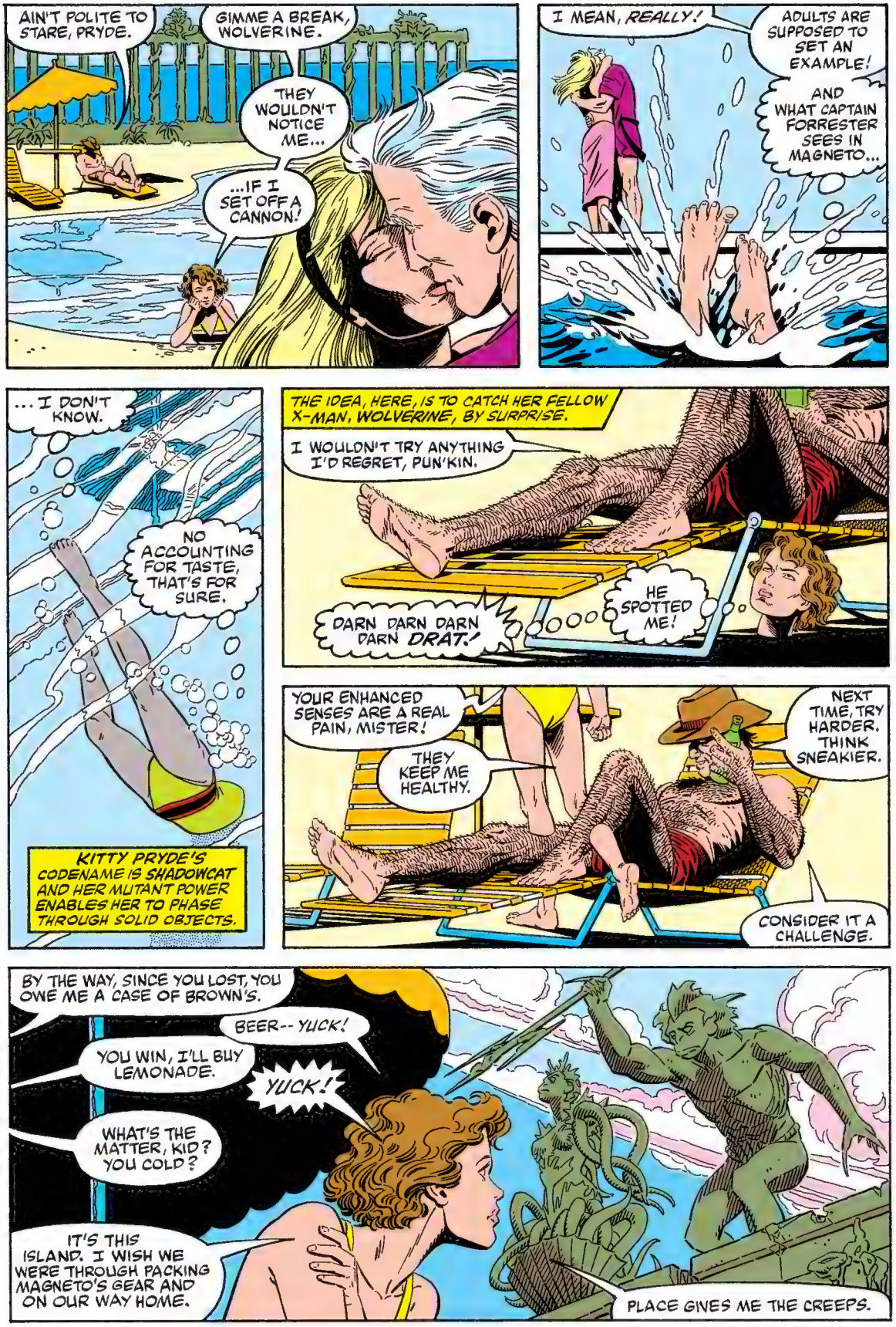
...A SECOND TIME.

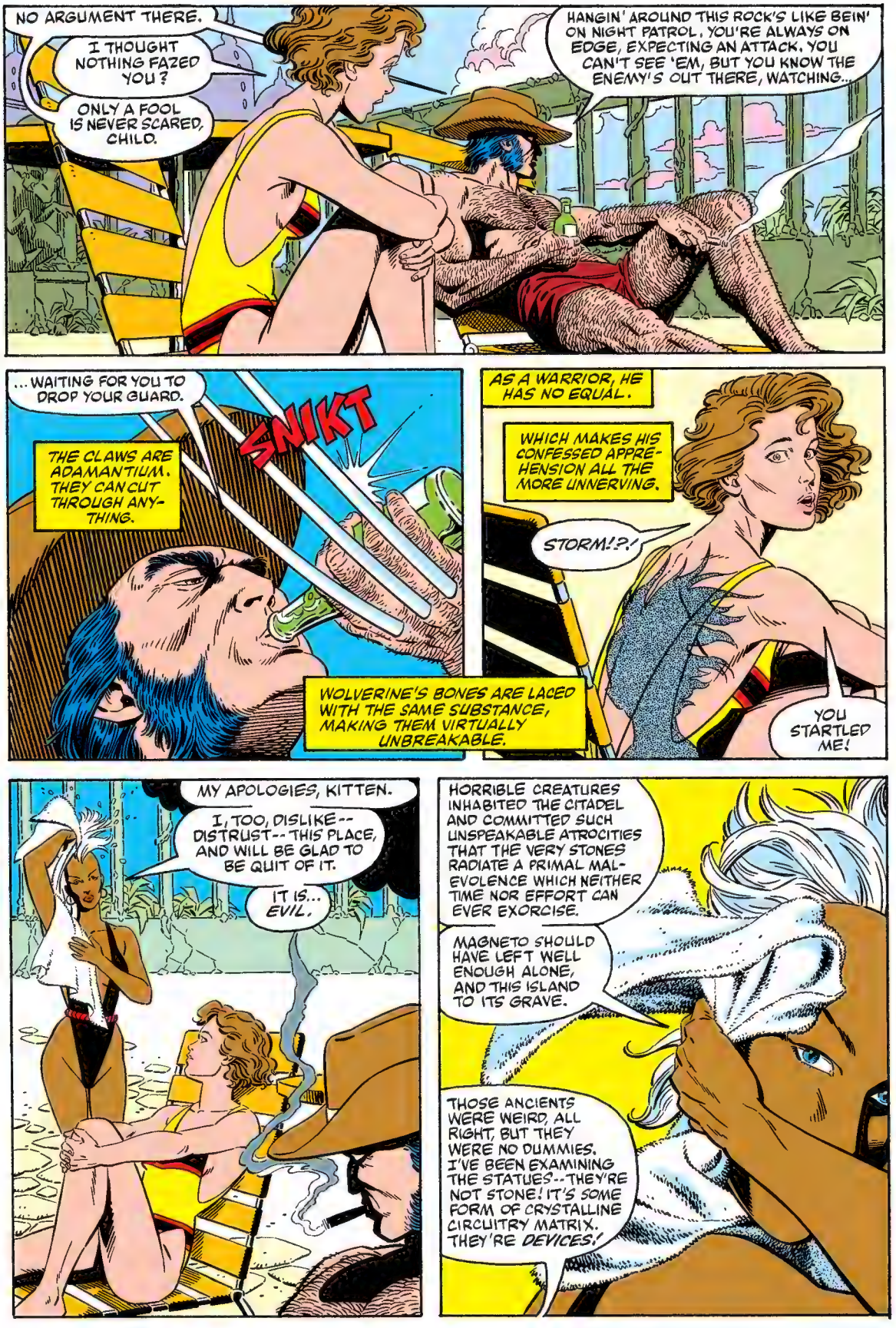
I UNDERSTAND. WE ALL HAVE SHADOWS ON OUR SOULS--LOSSES THAT, AT THE TIME, SEEMED TOO TERRIBLE TO BEAR, THAT WE THOUGHT WOULD SCAR AND TAINT US FOREVER--

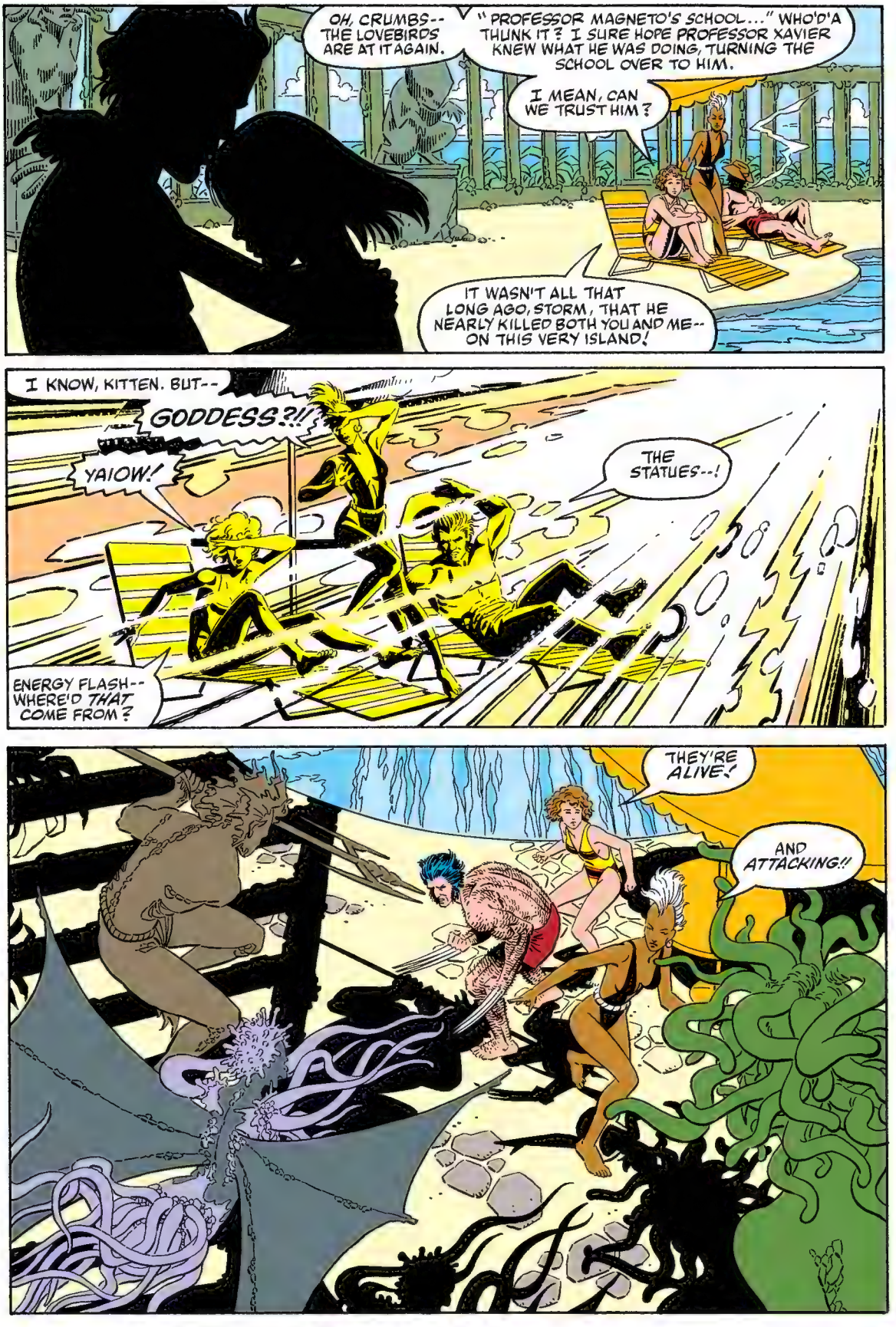
--BUT THOSE DAYS ARE PAST, MY LOVE. YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE--BETTER, NOBLER RESPONSIBILITIES--AS THE HEADMASTER OF *PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.*

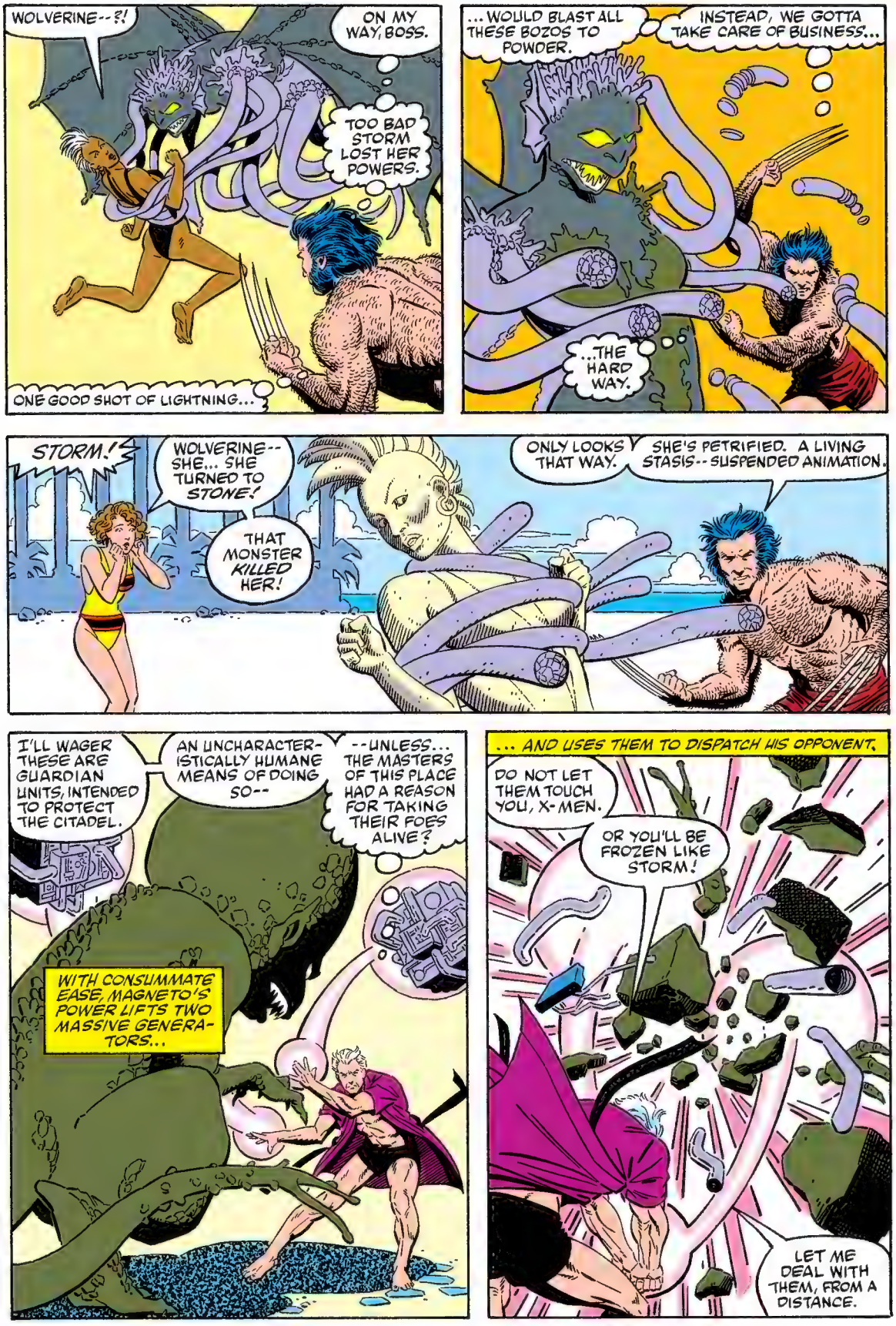
LET THE FUTURE, FOR US, BE FULL OF HOPE. NO SHADOWS, ONLY LIGHT.

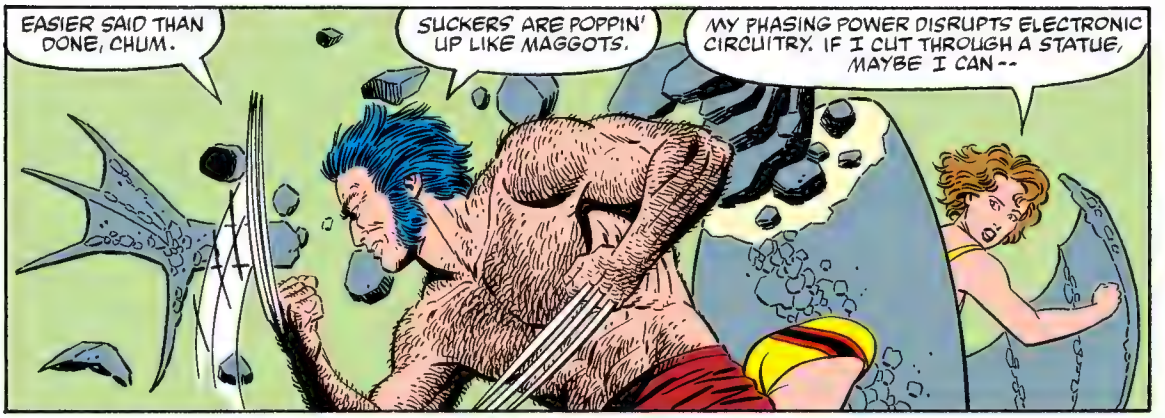
A LOVELY DREAM. TIME WILL TELL WHETHER OR NOT IT BECOMES REALITY.


AIN'T POLITE TO STARE, PRYDE.
GIMME A BREAK, WOLVERINE.
THEY WOULDN'T NOTICE ME...
...IF I SET OFF A CANNON!
I MEAN, REALLY!
ADULTS ARE SUPPOSED TO SET AN EXAMPLE!
AND WHAT CAPTAIN FORRESTER SEES IN MAGNETO...
... I DON'T KNOW.
NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
KITTY PRYDE'S CODENAME IS SHADOWCAT AND HER MUTANT POWER ENABLES HER TO PHASE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS.
THE IDEA, HERE, IS TO CATCH HER FELLOW X-MAN, WOLVERINE, BY SURPRISE.
I WOULDN'T TRY ANYTHING I'D REGRET, PUN'KIN.
DARN DARN DARN DARN DRAT!
HE SPOTTED ME!
YOUR ENHANCED SENSES ARE A REAL PAIN, MISTER!
THEY KEEP ME HEALTHY.
NEXT TIME, TRY HARDER. THINK SNEAKIER.
CONSIDER IT A CHALLENGE.
BY THE WAY, SINCE YOU LOST, YOU OWE ME A CASE OF BROWN'S.
BEER-- YUCK!
YOU WIN, I'LL BUY LEMONADE.
YUCK!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KID? YOU COLD?
IT'S THIS ISLAND. I WISH WE WERE THROUGH PACKING MAGNETO'S GEAR AND ON OUR WAY HOME.
PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

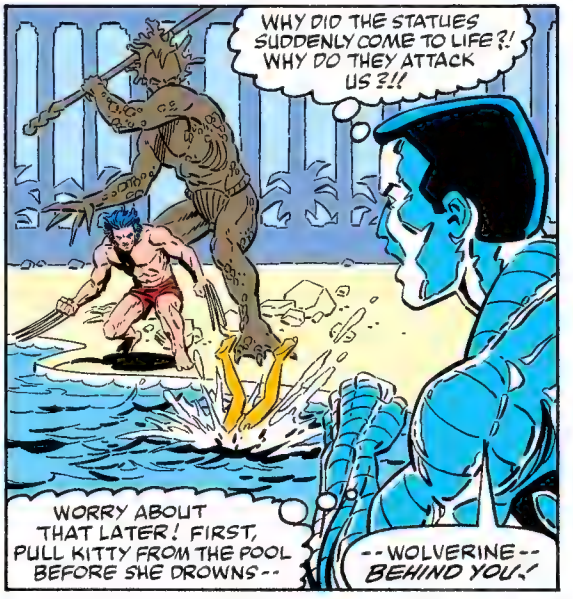

NO ARGUMENT THERE.
I THOUGHT NOTHING FAZED YOU?
ONLY A FOOL IS NEVER SCARED, CHILD.
HANGIN' AROUND THIS ROCK'S LIKE BEIN' ON NIGHT PATROL, YOU'RE ALWAYS ON EDGE, EXPECTING AN ATTACK. YOU CAN'T SEE 'EM, BUT YOU KNOW THE ENEMY'S OUT THERE, WATCHING...
...WAITING FOR YOU TO DROP YOUR GUARD.
THE CLAWS ARE ADAMANTIUM. THEY CAN CUT THROUGH ANY-THING.
SNIKT
WOLVERINE'S BONES ARE LACED WITH THE SAME SUBSTANCE, MAKING THEM VIRTUALLY UNBREAKABLE.
AS A WARRIOR, HE HAS NO EQUAL.
WHICH MAKES HIS CONFESSED APPRE-HENSION ALL THE MORE UNNERVING.
STORM!?!
YOU STARTLED ME!
MY APOLOGIES, KITTEN.
I, TOO, DISLIKE--DISTRUST--THIS PLACE, AND WILL BE GLAD TO BE QUIT OF IT.
IT IS... EVIL.
HORRIBLE CREATURES INHABITED THE CITADEL AND COMMITTED SUCH UNSPEAKABLE ATROCITIES THAT THE VERY STONES RADIATE A PRIMAL MAL-EVOLENCE WHICH NEITHER TIME NOR EFFORT CAN EVER EXORCISE.
MAGNETO SHOULD HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE, AND THIS ISLAND TO ITS GRAVE.
THOSE ANCIENTS WERE WEIRD, ALL RIGHT, BUT THEY WERE NO DUMMIES. I'VE BEEN EXAMINING THE STATUES--THEY'RE NOT STONE! IT'S SOME FORM OF CRYSTALLINE CIRCUITRY MATRIX. THEY'RE DEVICES!

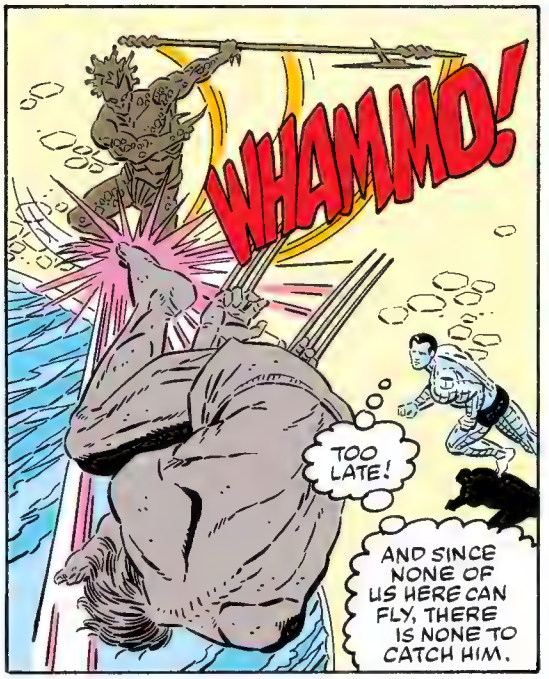

OH, CRUMBS-- THE LOVEBIRDS ARE AT IT AGAIN.
"PROFESSOR MAGNETO'S SCHOOL..." WHO'D'A THUNK IT? I SURE HOPE PROFESSOR XAVIER KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING, TURNING THE SCHOOL OVER TO HIM.
I MEAN, CAN WE TRUST HIM?
IT WASN'T ALL THAT LONG AGO, STORM, THAT HE NEARLY KILLED BOTH YOU AND ME-- ON THIS VERY ISLAND!
I KNOW, KITTEN. BUT--
GODDESS?!!
YAIOW!
THE STATUES--!
ENERGY FLASH-- WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?
THEY'RE ALIVE!
AND ATTACKING!!

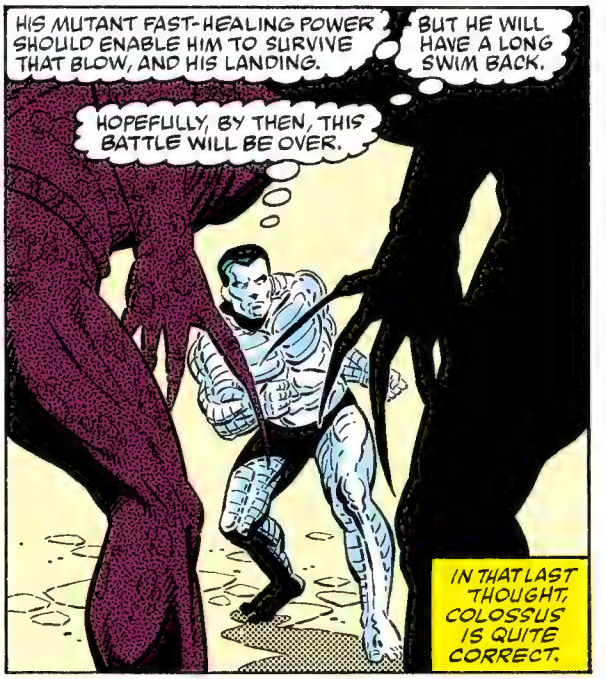

WOLVERINE--?!
ON MY WAY, BOSS.
TOO BAD STORM LOST HER POWERS.
ONE GOOD SHOT OF LIGHTNING...
...WOULD BLAST ALL THESE BOZOS TO POWDER.
INSTEAD, WE GOTTA TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS...
...THE HARD WAY.
STORM!
WOLVERINE--SHE... SHE TURNED TO STONE!
THAT MONSTER KILLED HER!
ONLY LOOKS THAT WAY.
SHE'S PETRIFIED. A LIVING STASIS--SUSPENDED ANIMATION.
I'LL WAGER THESE ARE GUARDIAN UNITS, INTENDED TO PROTECT THE CITADEL.
AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY HUMANE MEANS OF DOING SO--
--UNLESS... THE MASTERS OF THIS PLACE HAD A REASON FOR TAKING THEIR FOES ALIVE?
WITH CONSUMMATE EASE, MAGNETO'S POWER LIFTS TWO MASSIVE GENERATORS...
... AND USES THEM TO DISPATCH HIS OPPONENT.
DO NOT LET THEM TOUCH YOU, X-MEN.
OR YOU'LL BE FROZEN LIKE STORM!
LET ME DEAL WITH THEM, FROM A DISTANCE.

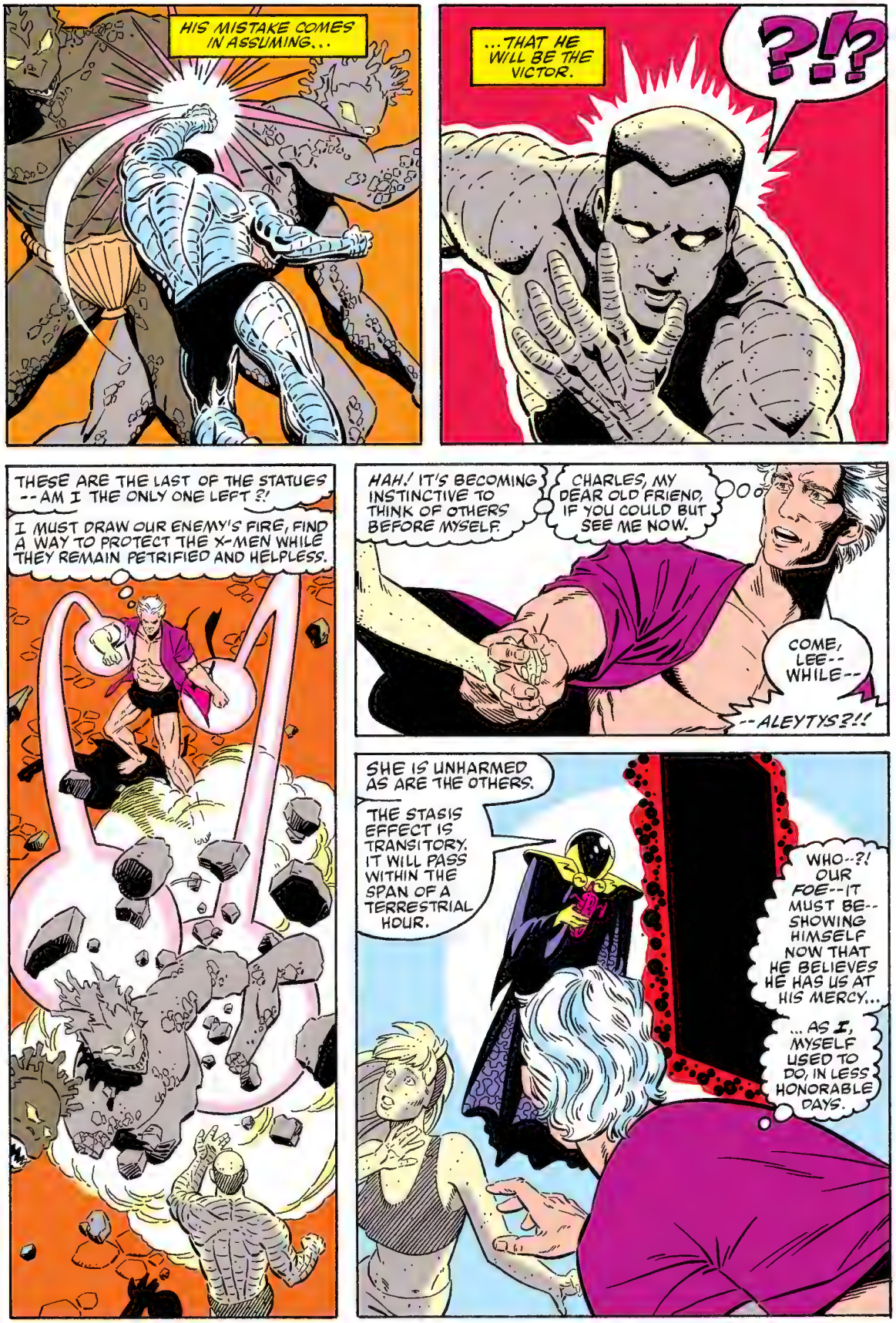

EASIER SAID THAN DONE, CHUM.
SUCKERS ARE POPPIN' UP LIKE MAGGOTS.
MY PHASING POWER DISRUPTS ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY. IF I CUT THROUGH A STATUE, MAYBE I CAN--

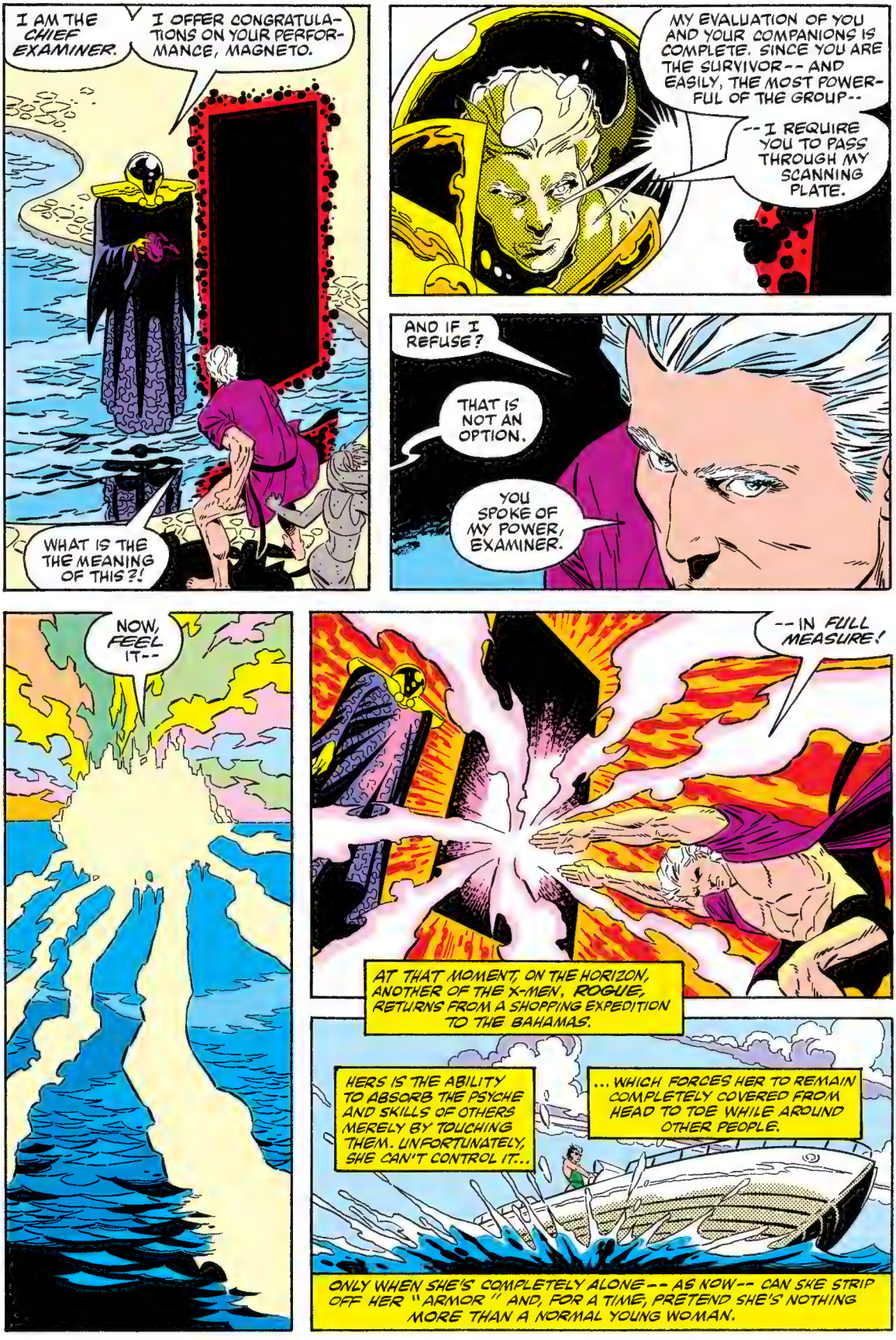
--OH, NO!
THE STATUE ISN'T AFFECTED--
--BUT I AM!
KITTY!

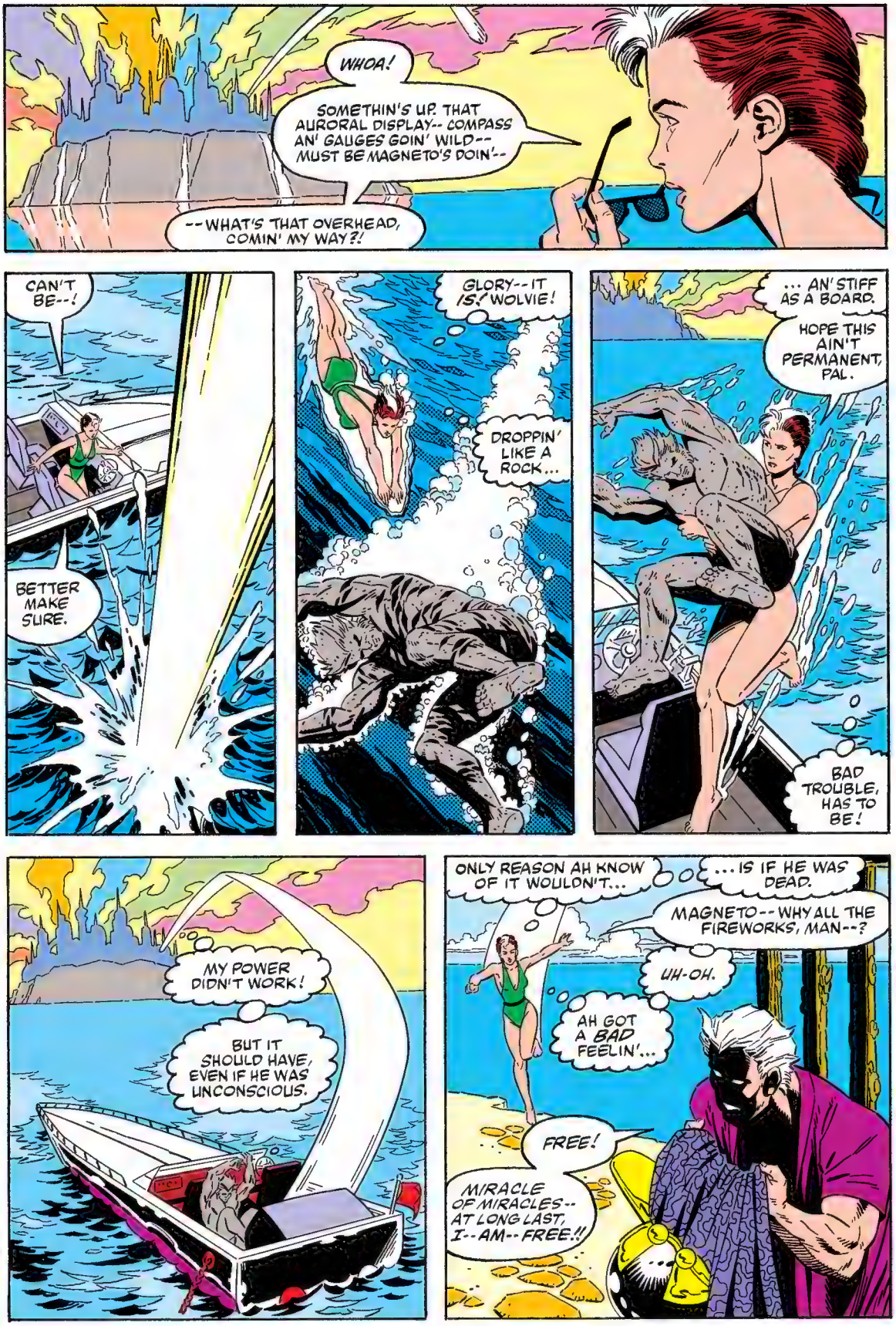

WHY DID THE STATUES SUDDENLY COME TO LIFE?! WHY DO THEY ATTACK US?!!
WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER! FIRST, PULL KITTY FROM THE POOL BEFORE SHE DROWNS--
--WOLVERINE-- BEHIND YOU!

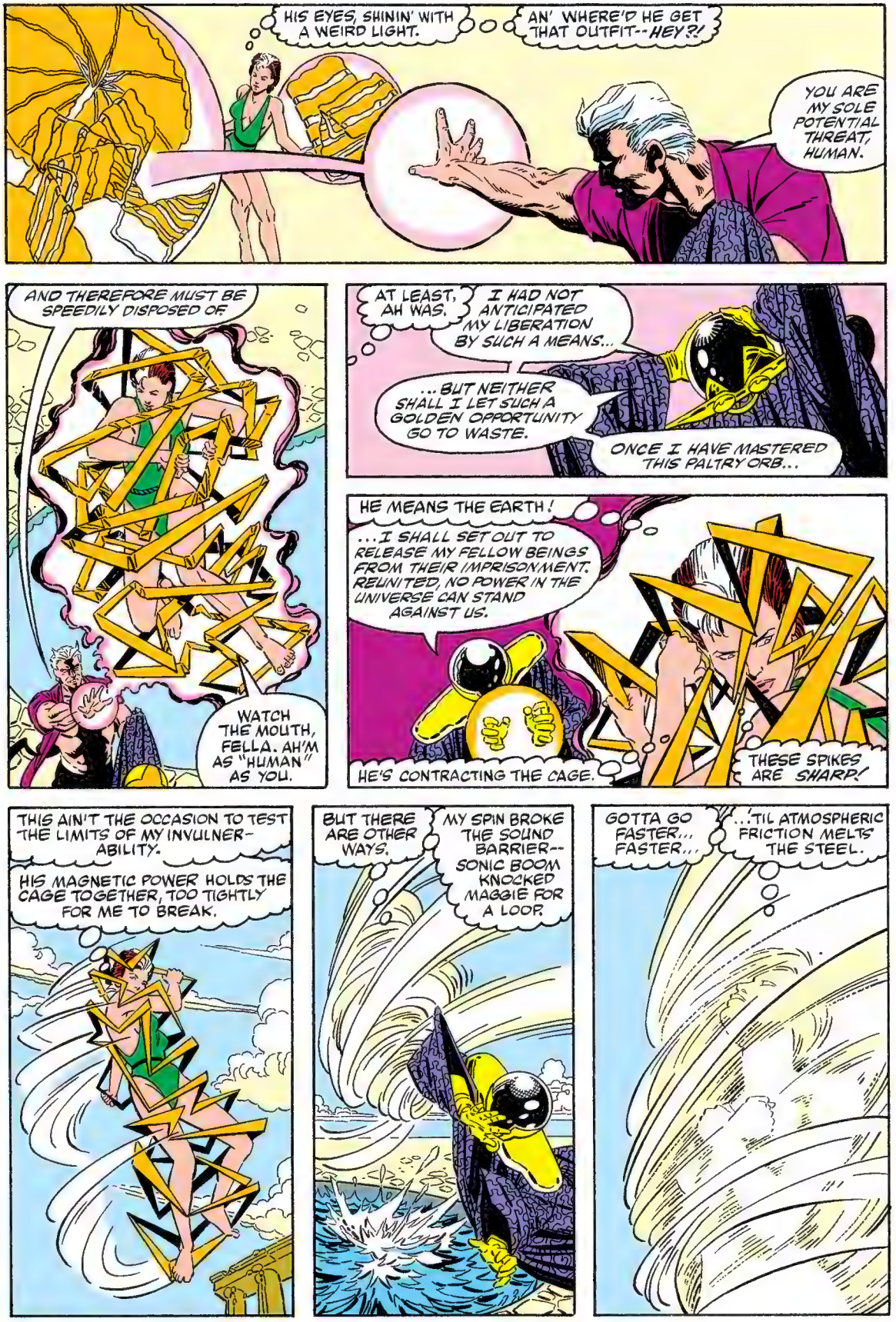

WHAMMO!
TOO LATE!
AND SINCE NONE OF US HERE CAN FLY, THERE IS NONE TO CATCH HIM.

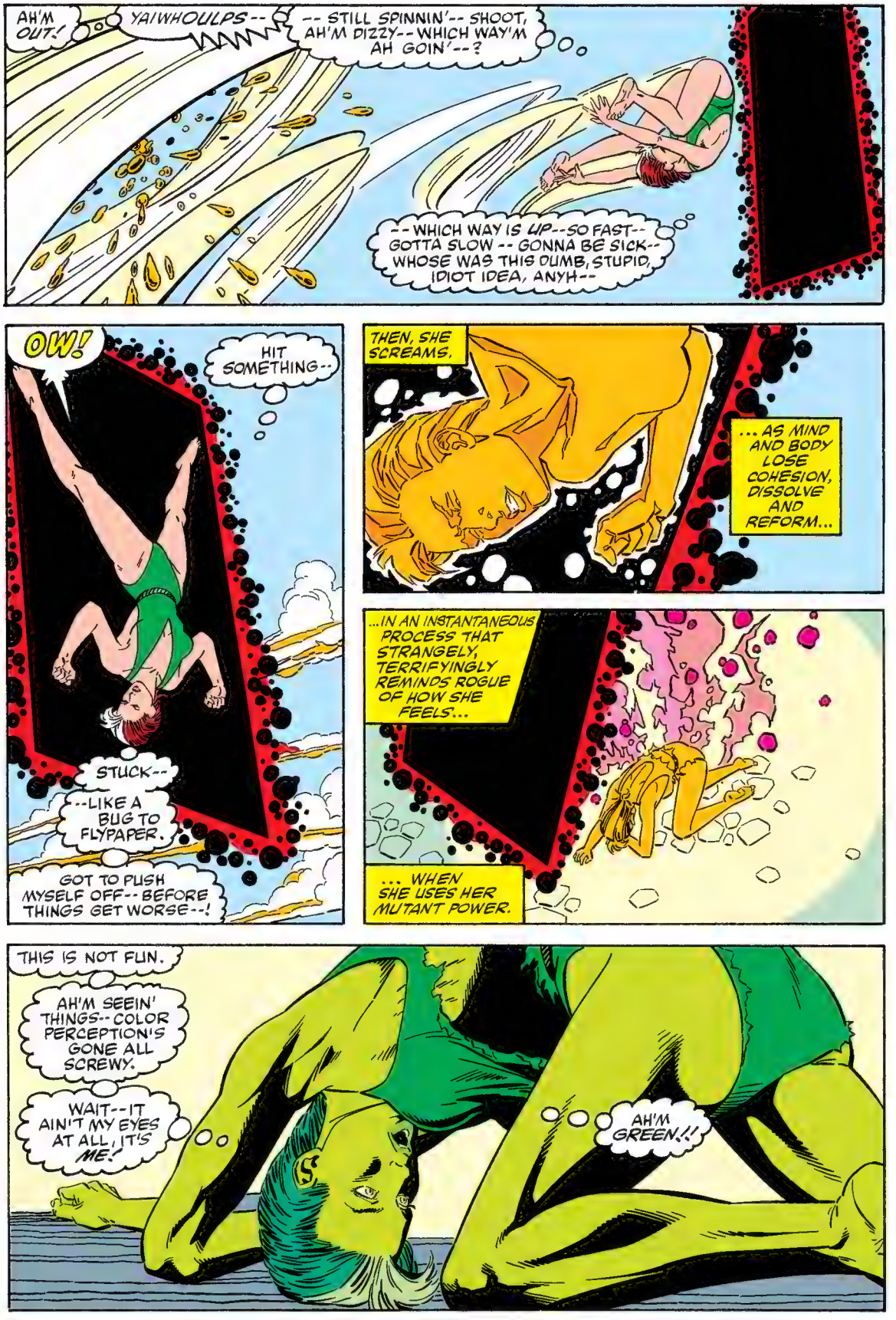

HIS MUTANT FAST-HEALING POWER SHOULD ENABLE HIM TO SURVIVE THAT BLOW, AND HIS LANDING.
BUT HE WILL HAVE A LONG SWIM BACK.
HOPEFULLY, BY THEN, THIS BATTLE WILL BE OVER.
IN THAT LAST THOUGHT, COLOSSUS IS QUITE CORRECT.

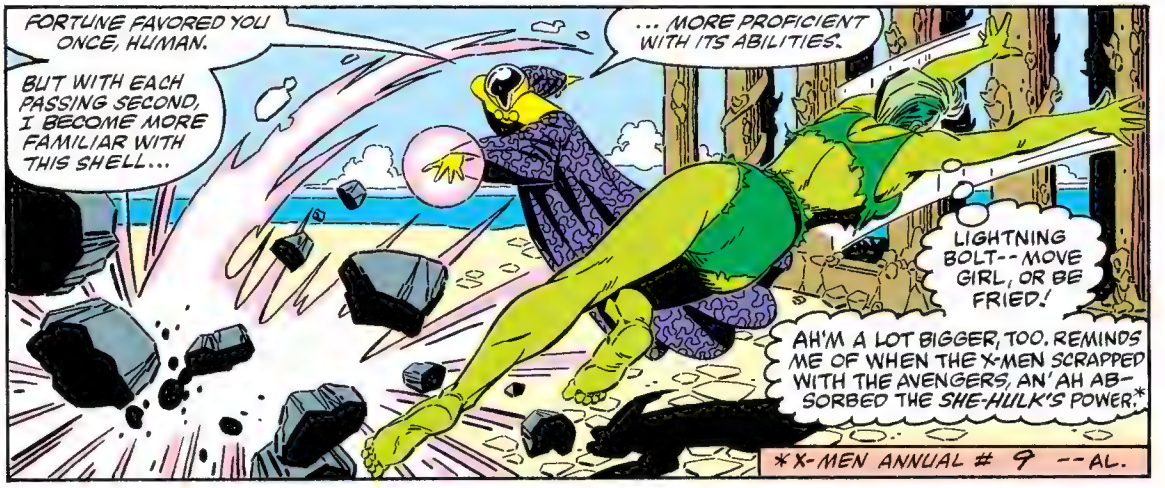

HIS MISTAKE COMES IN ASSUMING...
...THAT HE WILL BE THE VICTOR.
?!?
THESE ARE THE LAST OF THE STATUES --AM I THE ONLY ONE LEFT?!
I MUST DRAW OUR ENEMY'S FIRE, FIND A WAY TO PROTECT THE X-MEN WHILE THEY REMAIN PETRIFIED AND HELPLESS.
HAH! IT'S BECOMING INSTINCTIVE TO THINK OF OTHERS BEFORE MYSELF.
CHARLES, MY DEAR OLD FRIEND, IF YOU COULD BUT SEE ME NOW.
COME, LEE-- WHILE--
--ALEYTYS?!!
SHE IS UNHARMED AS ARE THE OTHERS.
THE STASIS EFFECT IS TRANSITORY. IT WILL PASS WITHIN THE SPAN OF A TERRESTRIAL HOUR.
WHO--?! OUR FOE--IT MUST BE-- SHOWING HIMSELF NOW THAT HE BELIEVES HE HAS US AT HIS MERCY...
...AS I, MYSELF USED TO DO, IN LESS HONORABLE DAYS.

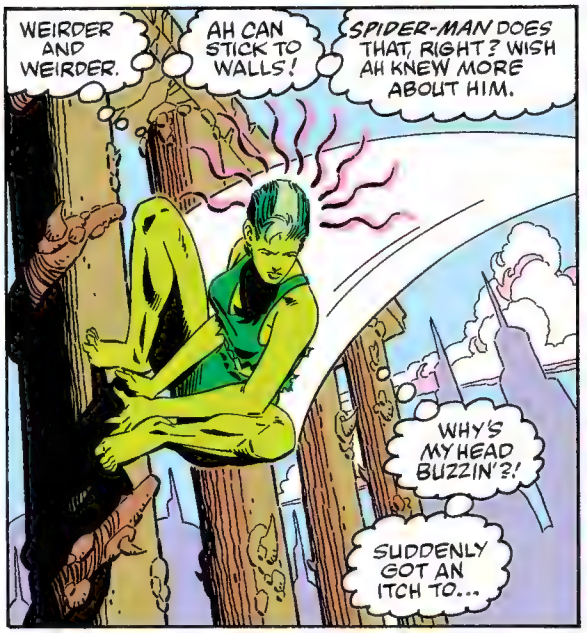

I AM THE CHIEF EXAMINER.
I OFFER CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PERFORMANCE, MAGNETO.
WHAT IS THE THE MEANING OF THIS?!
MY EVALUATION OF YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS IS COMPLETE. SINCE YOU ARE THE SURVIVOR-- AND EASILY, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THE GROUP--
--I REQUIRE YOU TO PASS THROUGH MY SCANNING PLATE.
AND IF I REFUSE?
THAT IS NOT AN OPTION.
YOU SPOKE OF MY POWER, EXAMINER.
NOW, FEEL IT--
--IN FULL MEASURE!
AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE HORIZON, ANOTHER OF THE X-MEN, ROGUE, RETURNS FROM A SHOPPING EXPEDITION TO THE BAHAMAS.
HERS IS THE ABILITY TO ABSORB THE PSYCHE AND SKILLS OF OTHERS MERELY BY TOUCHING THEM. UNFORTUNATELY, SHE CAN'T CONTROL IT...
...WHICH FORCES HER TO REMAIN COMPLETELY COVERED FROM HEAD TO TOE WHILE AROUND OTHER PEOPLE.
ONLY WHEN SHE'S COMPLETELY ALONE--AS NOW--CAN SHE STRIP OFF HER "ARMOR" AND, FOR A TIME, PRETEND SHE'S NOTHING MORE THAN A NORMAL YOUNG WOMAN.


WHOA!
SOMETHIN'S UP. THAT AURORAL DISPLAY-- COMPASS AN' GAUGES GOIN' WILD-- MUST BE MAGNETO'S DOIN'--
--WHAT'S THAT OVERHEAD, COMIN' MY WAY?!
CAN'T BE--!
BETTER MAKE SURE.
GLORY--IT IS! WOLVIE!
DROPPIN' LIKE A ROCK...
... AN' STIFF AS A BOARD.
HOPE THIS AIN'T PERMANENT, PAL.
BAD TROUBLE, HAS TO BE!
MY POWER DIDN'T WORK!
BUT IT SHOULD HAVE, EVEN IF HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS.
ONLY REASON AH KNOW OF IT WOULDN'T...
... IS IF HE WAS DEAD.
MAGNETO--WHY ALL THE FIREWORKS, MAN--?
UH-OH.
AH GOT A BAD FEELIN'...
FREE!
MIRACLE OF MIRACLES-- AT LONG LAST, I--AM--FREE!!

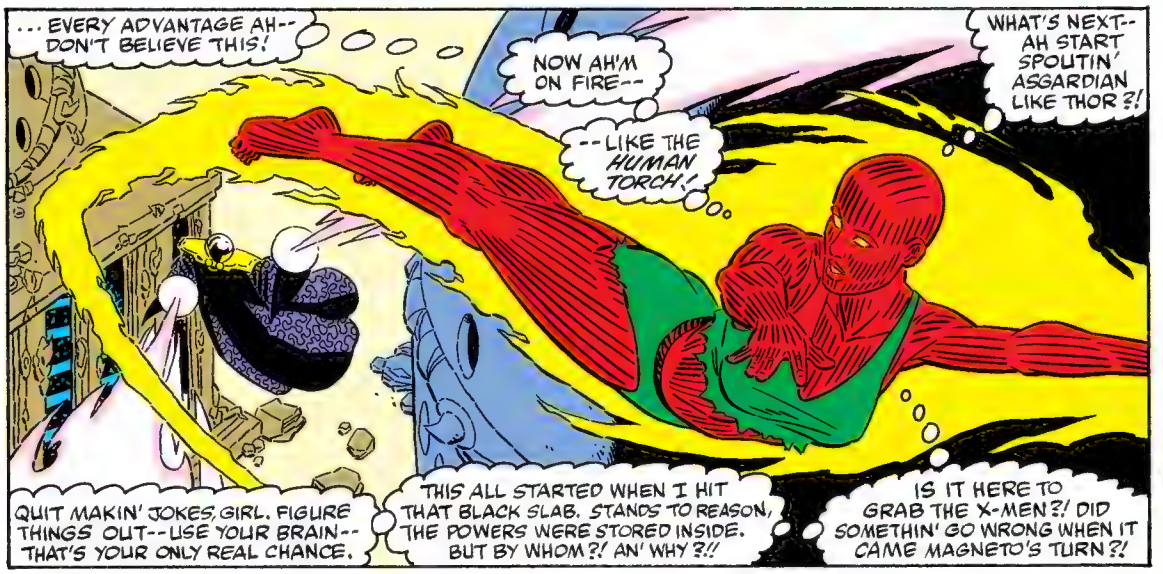

HIS EYES, SHININ' WITH A WEIRD LIGHT.
AN' WHERE'D HE GET THAT OUTFIT--HEY?!
YOU ARE MY SOLE POTENTIAL THREAT, HUMAN.
AND THEREFORE MUST BE SPEEDILY DISPOSED OF.
WATCH THE MOUTH, FELLA. AH'M AS "HUMAN" AS YOU.
AT LEAST, AH WAS.
I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED MY LIBERATION BY SUCH A MEANS...
...BUT NEITHER SHALL I LET SUCH A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY GO TO WASTE.
ONCE I HAVE MASTERED THIS PALTRY ORB...
HE MEANS THE EARTH!
...I SHALL SET OUT TO RELEASE MY FELLOW BEINGS FROM THEIR IMPRISONMENT. REUNITED, NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE CAN STAND AGAINST US.
HE'S CONTRACTING THE CAGE.
THESE SPIKES ARE SHARP!
THIS AIN'T THE OCCASION TO TEST THE LIMITS OF MY INVULNERABILITY.
HIS MAGNETIC POWER HOLDS THE CAGE TOGETHER, TOO TIGHTLY FOR ME TO BREAK.
BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS.
MY SPIN BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER--SONIC BOOM KNOCKED MAGGIE FOR A LOOP.
GOTTA GO FASTER... FASTER...
...'TIL ATMOSPHERIC FRICTION MELTS THE STEEL.

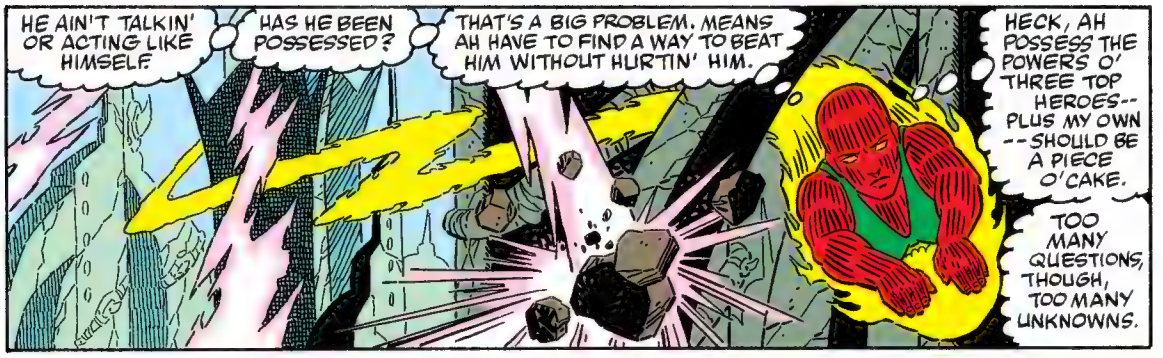

AH'M OUT!
YA!WHOOLPS--
-- STILL SPINNIN'-- SHOOT, AH'M DIZZY-- WHICH WAY'M AH GOIN'--?
--WHICH WAY IS UP--SO FAST-- GOTTA SLOW -- GONNA BE SICK-- WHOSE WAS THIS DUMB, STUPID, IDIOT IDEA, ANYH--
OW!
HIT SOMETHING--
STUCK--
--LIKE A BUG TO FLYPAPER.
GOT TO PUSH MYSELF OFF-- BEFORE THINGS GET WORSE--!
THEN, SHE SCREAMS,
... AS MIND AND BODY LOSE COHESION, DISSOLVE AND REFORM...
...IN AN INSTANTANEOUS PROCESS THAT STRANGELY, TERRIFYINGLY REMINDS ROGUE OF HOW SHE FEELS...
... WHEN SHE USES HER MUTANT POWER.
THIS IS NOT FUN.
AH'M SEEIN' THINGS-- COLOR PERCEPTION'S GONE ALL SCREWY.
WAIT--IT AIN'T MY EYES AT ALL; IT'S ME!
AH'M GREEN.!!

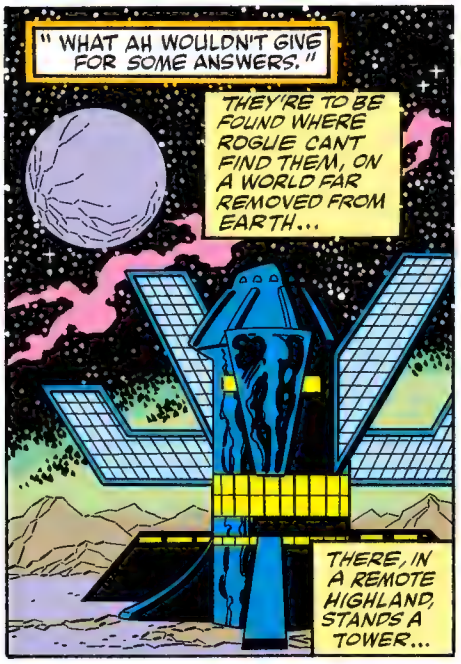

FORTUNE FAVORED YOU ONCE, HUMAN.
BUT WITH EACH PASSING SECOND, I BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THIS SHELL...
... MORE PROFICIENT WITH ITS ABILITIES.
LIGHTNING BOLT-- MOVE GIRL, OR BE FRIED!
AH'M A LOT BIGGER, TOO. REMINDS ME OF WHEN THE X-MEN SCRAPPED WITH THE AVENGERS, AN' AH AB-SORBED THE SHE-HULK'S POWER.*
*X-MEN ANNUAL # 9 --AL.

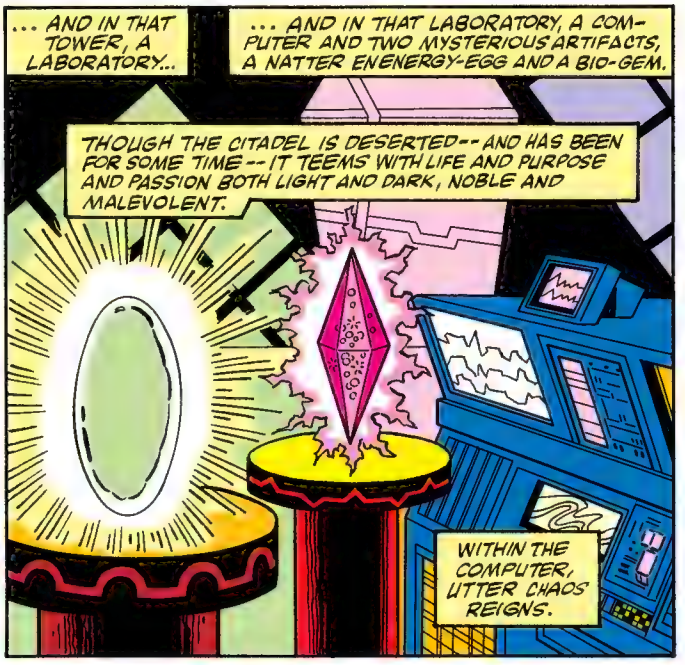

WEIRDER AND WEIRDER.
AH CAN STICK TO WALLS!
SPIDER-MAN DOES THAT, RIGHT? WISH AH KNEW MORE ABOUT HIM.
WHY'S MY HEAD BUZZIN'?!
SUDDENLY GOT AN ITCH TO...

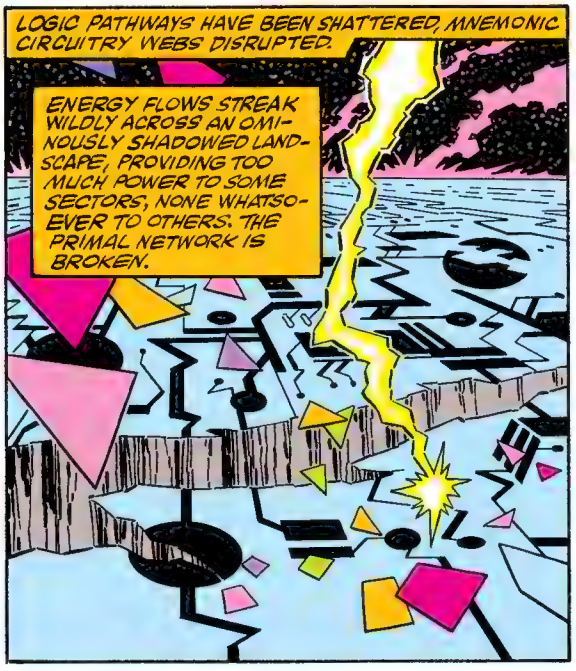
...VA MOOSE?!?
THAT WAS TOO DARN CLOSE FOR COMFORT.
THE BUZZ-- WAS IT SOME KIND'A WARNIN'?!
AH SURE HOPE SO. AGAINST MAGGIE, AH'M GONNA NEED...

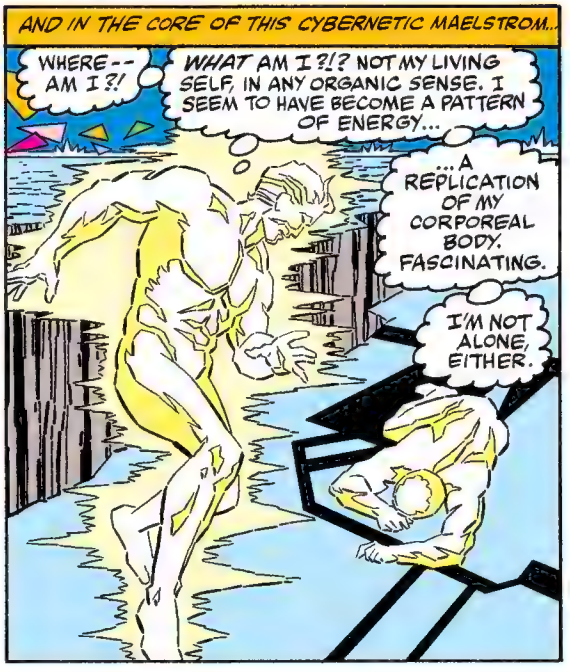

... EVERY ADVANTAGE AH-- DON'T BELIEVE THIS!
NOW AH'M ON FIRE--
--LIKE THE HUMAN TORCH!
WHAT'S NEXT-- AH START SPOUTIN' ASGARDIAN LIKE THOR?!
QUIT MAKIN' JOKES, GIRL. FIGURE THINGS OUT--USE YOUR BRAIN-- THAT'S YOUR ONLY REAL CHANCE.
THIS ALL STARTED WHEN I HIT THAT BLACK SLAB. STANDS TO REASON, THE POWERS WERE STORED INSIDE. BUT BY WHOM?! AN' WHY?!!
IS IT HERE TO GRAB THE X-MEN?! DID SOMETHIN' GO WRONG WHEN IT CAME MAGNETO'S TURN?!


HE AIN'T TALKIN' OR ACTING LIKE HIMSELF.
HAS HE BEEN POSSESSED?
THAT'S A BIG PROBLEM. MEANS AH HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO BEAT HIM WITHOUT HURTIN' HIM.
HECK, AH POSSESS THE POWERS O' THREE TOP HEROES-- PLUS MY OWN -- SHOULD BE A PIECE O' CAKE.
TOO MANY QUESTIONS, THOUGH, TOO MANY UNKNOWNS.

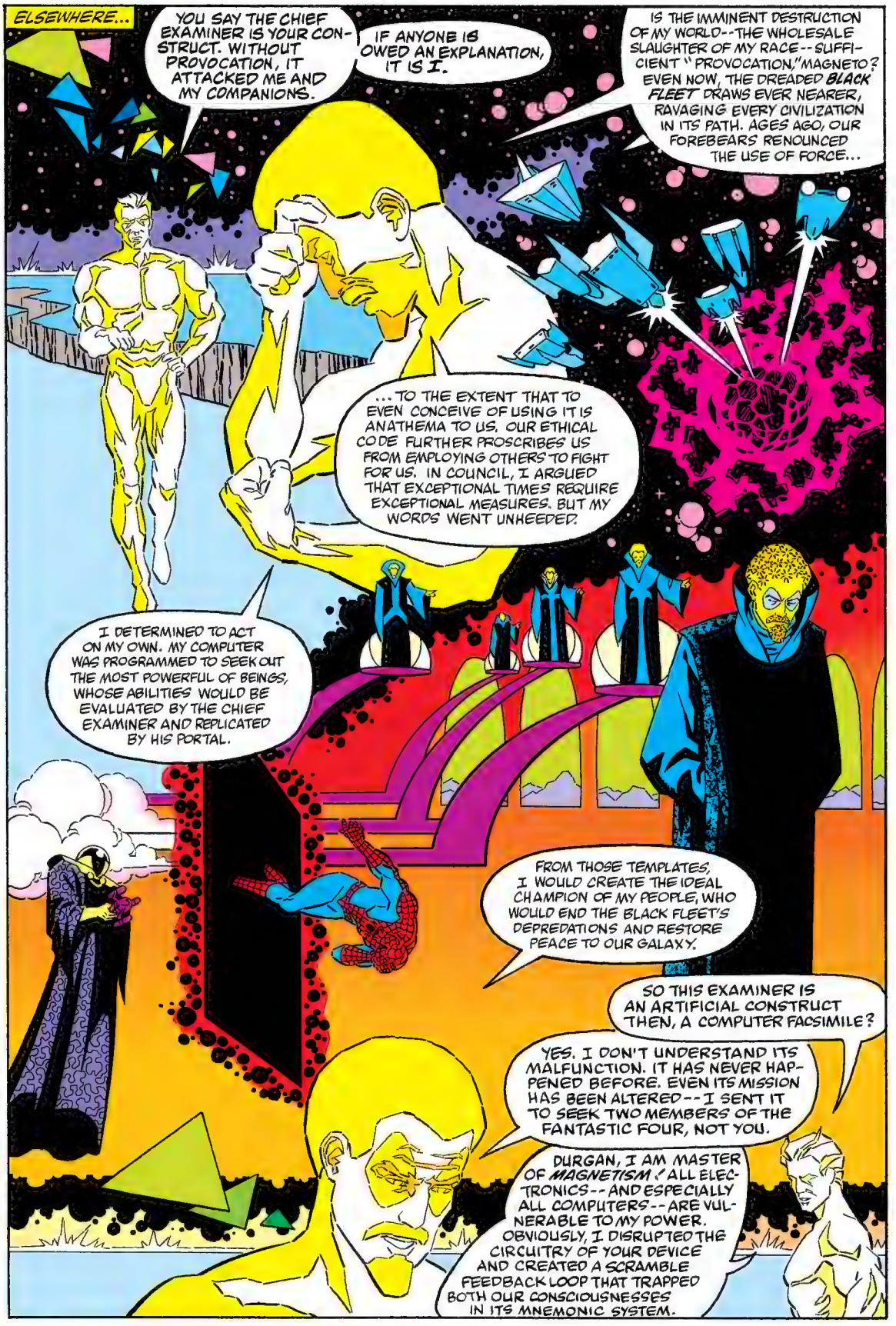

" WHAT AH WOULDN'T GIVE FOR SOME ANSWERS. "
THEY'RE TO BE FOUND WHERE ROGUE CAN'T FIND THEM, ON A WORLD FAR REMOVED FROM EARTH...
THERE, IN A REMOTE HIGHLAND, STANDS A TOWER...

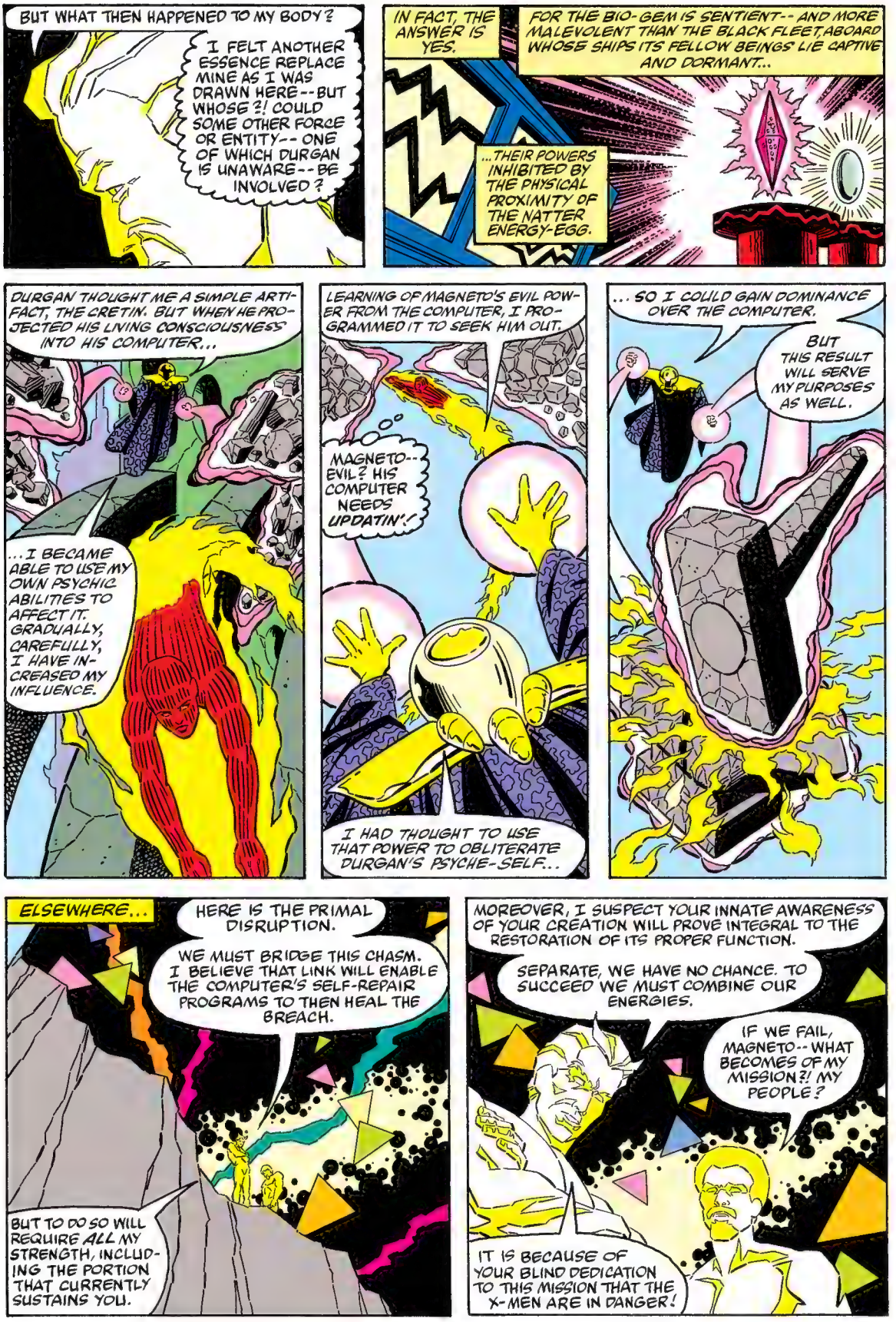

... AND IN THAT TOWER, A LABORATORY...
... AND IN THAT LABORATORY, A COMPUTER AND TWO MYSTERIOUS ARTIFACTS, A NATTER ENENERGY-EGG AND A BIO-GEM.
THOUGH THE CITADEL IS DESERTED-- AND HAS BEEN FOR SOME TIME -- IT TEEMS WITH LIFE AND PURPOSE AND PASSION BOTH LIGHT AND DARK, NOBLE AND MALEVOLENT.
WITHIN THE COMPUTER, UTTER CHAOS REIGNS.


LOGIC PATHWAYS HAVE BEEN SHATTERED, MNEMONIC CIRCUITRY WEBS DISRUPTED.
ENERGY FLOWS STREAK WILDLY ACROSS AN OMINOUSLY SHADOWED LANDSCAPE, PROVIDING TOO MUCH POWER TO SOME SECTORS, NONE WHATSOEVER TO OTHERS. THE PRIMAL NETWORK IS BROKEN.

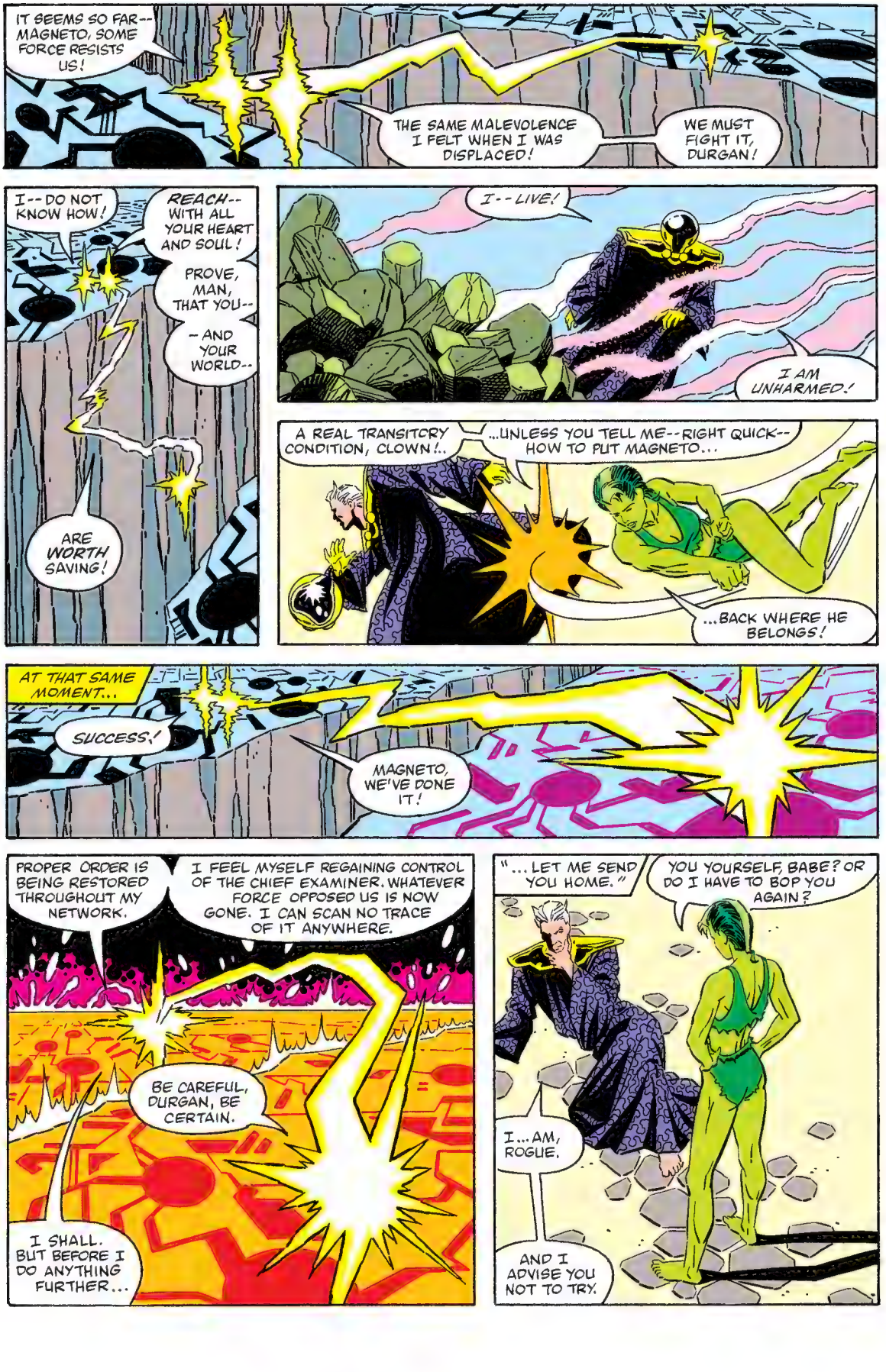

AND IN THE CORE OF THIS CYBERNETIC MAELSTROM...
WHERE-- AM I?!
WHAT AM I?!? NOT MY LIVING SELF, IN ANY ORGANIC SENSE. I SEEM TO HAVE BECOME A PATTERN OF ENERGY...
...A REPLICATION OF MY CORPOREAL BODY. FASCINATING.
I'M NOT ALONE, EITHER.

THIS BEING'S LIFEGLOW IS VERY DIM. THAT CAN'T BE A HEALTHY SIGN. PERHAPS A PORTION OF MY OWN ESSENCE WILL RESTORE HIM...
...WITHOUT UNDULY WEAKENING ME.
I AM MAGNETO...
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! I AM DURGAN.
INDEED. IT IS CUSTOMARY, DURGAN--AMONG CIVILIZED SOCIETY--TO THANK ONE WHO HAS SAVED YOUR LIFE.
HUMAN FOOL--HAVE YOU THE SLIGHTEST CONCEPTION OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE?!!
MEANWHILE...
TRY A TORCH STUNT--CIRCLE FAST AS I CAN...
...AN' CREATE A WHIRLWIND THAT'LL SUCK THE OXYGEN AWAY FROM MAGGIE...
...AN' KAYO HIM--WHOOPS?!
HE'S COUNTERED WITH AN ENERGY VORTEX!
SUCKER CAN TAP INTO THE MAGNETIC FIELD OF THE EARTH ITSELF--
--CAN'T MATCH THAT KIND OF STRENGTH!

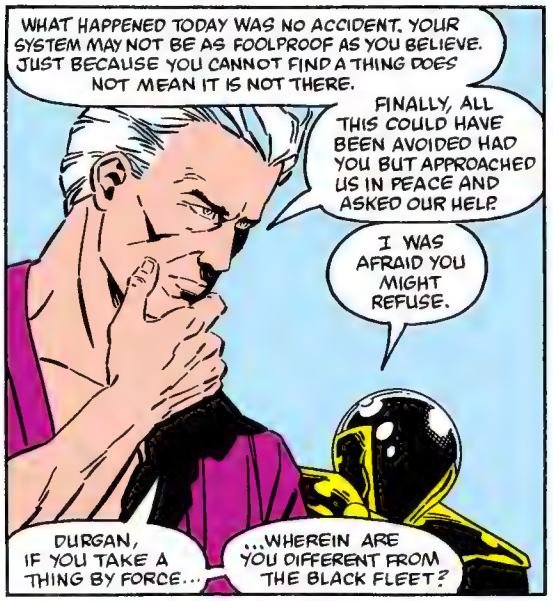

ELSEWHERE...
YOU SAY THE CHIEF EXAMINER IS YOUR CONSTRUCT. WITHOUT PROVOCATION, IT ATTACKED ME AND MY COMPANIONS.
IF ANYONE IS OWED AN EXPLANATION, IT IS I.
IS THE IMMINENT DESTRUCTION OF MY WORLD--THE WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER OF MY RACE--SUFFICIENT "PROVOCATION," MAGNETO? EVEN NOW, THE DREADED BLACK FLEET DRAWS EVER NEARER, RAVAGING EVERY CIVILIZATION IN ITS PATH. AGES AGO, OUR FOREBEARS RENOUNCED THE USE OF FORCE...
...TO THE EXTENT THAT TO EVEN CONCEIVE OF USING IT IS ANATHEMA TO US. OUR ETHICAL CODE FURTHER PROSCRIBES US FROM EMPLOYING OTHERS TO FIGHT FOR US. IN COUNCIL, I ARGUED THAT EXCEPTIONAL TIMES REQUIRE EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES. BUT MY WORDS WENT UNHEEDED.
I DETERMINED TO ACT ON MY OWN. MY COMPUTER WAS PROGRAMMED TO SEEK OUT THE MOST POWERFUL OF BEINGS, WHOSE ABILITIES WOULD BE EVALUATED BY THE CHIEF EXAMINER AND REPLICATED BY HIS PORTAL.
FROM THOSE TEMPLATES, I WOULD CREATE THE IDEAL CHAMPION OF MY PEOPLE, WHO WOULD END THE BLACK FLEET'S DEPREDATIONS AND RESTORE PEACE TO OUR GALAXY.
SO THIS EXAMINER IS AN ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCT THEN, A COMPUTER FACSIMILE?
YES. I DON'T UNDERSTAND ITS MALFUNCTION. IT HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE. EVEN ITS MISSION HAS BEEN ALTERED--I SENT IT TO SEEK TWO MEMBERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, NOT YOU.
DURGAN, I AM MASTER OF MAGNETISM. ALL ELECTRONICS--AND ESPECIALLY ALL COMPUTERS--ARE VULNERABLE TO MY POWER. OBVIOUSLY, I DISRUPTED THE CIRCUITRY OF YOUR DEVICE AND CREATED A SCRAMBLE FEEDBACK LOOP THAT TRAPPED BOTH OUR CONSCIOUSNESSES IN ITS MNEMONIC SYSTEM.

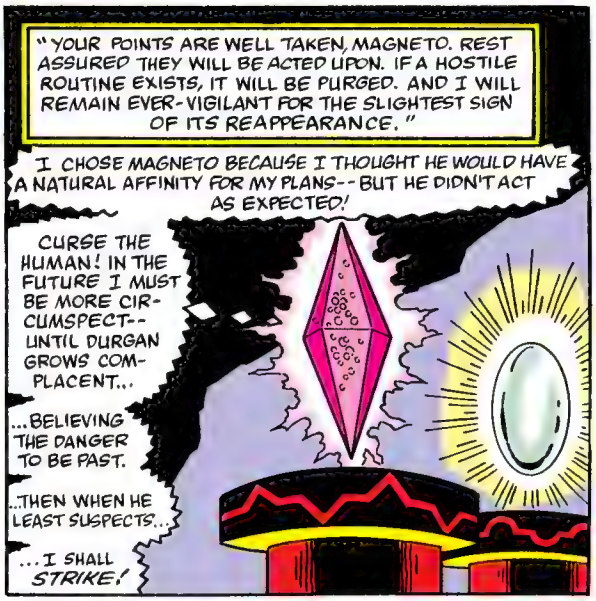

BUT WHAT THEN HAPPENED TO MY BODY?
I FELT ANOTHER ESSENCE REPLACE MINE AS I WAS DRAWN HERE--BUT WHOSE?! COULD SOME OTHER FORCE OR ENTITY--ONE OF WHICH DURGAN IS UNAWARE--BE INVOLVED?
IN FACT, THE ANSWER IS YES.
FOR THE BIO-GEM IS SENTIENT--AND MORE MALEVOLENT THAN THE BLACK FLEET ABOARD WHOSE SHIPS ITS FELLOW BEINGS LIE CAPTIVE AND DORMANT...
...THEIR POWERS INHIBITED BY THE PHYSICAL PROXIMITY OF THE NATTER ENERGY-EGG.
DURGAN THOUGHT ME A SIMPLE ARTIFACT, THE CRETIN. BUT WHEN HE PROJECTED HIS LIVING CONSCIOUSNESS INTO HIS COMPUTER...
...I BECAME ABLE TO USE MY OWN PSYCHIC ABILITIES TO AFFECT IT. GRADUALLY, CAREFULLY, I HAVE INCREASED MY INFLUENCE.
LEARNING OF MAGNETO'S EVIL POWER FROM THE COMPUTER, I PROGRAMMED IT TO SEEK HIM OUT.
MAGNETO--EVIL? HIS COMPUTER NEEDS UPDATIN'!
I HAD THOUGHT TO USE THAT POWER TO OBLITERATE DURGAN'S PSYCHE-SELF...
...SO I COULD GAIN DOMINANCE OVER THE COMPUTER.
BUT THIS RESULT WILL SERVE MY PURPOSES AS WELL.
ELSEWHERE...
HERE IS THE PRIMAL DISRUPTION.
WE MUST BRIDGE THIS CHASM. I BELIEVE THAT LINK WILL ENABLE THE COMPUTER'S SELF-REPAIR PROGRAMS TO THEN HEAL THE BREACH.
BUT TO DO SO WILL REQUIRE ALL MY STRENGTH, INCLUDING THE PORTION THAT CURRENTLY SUSTAINS YOU.
MOREOVER, I SUSPECT YOUR INNATE AWARENESS OF YOUR CREATION WILL PROVE INTEGRAL TO THE RESTORATION OF ITS PROPER FUNCTION.
SEPARATE, WE HAVE NO CHANCE. TO SUCCEED WE MUST COMBINE OUR ENERGIES.
IF WE FAIL, MAGNETO--WHAT BECOMES OF MY MISSION?! MY PEOPLE?
IT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR BLIND DEDICATION TO THIS MISSION THAT THE X-MEN ARE IN DANGER!

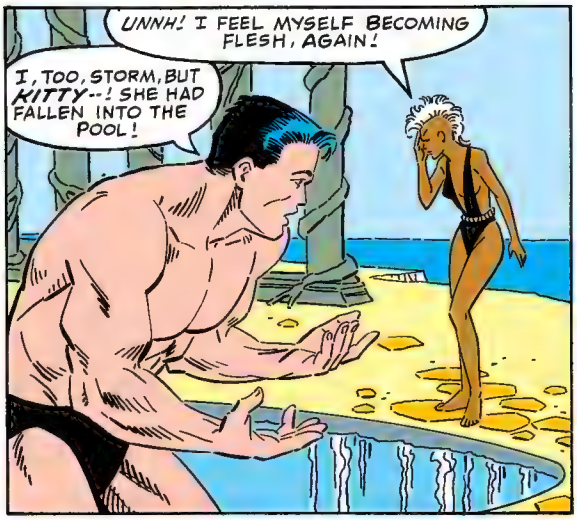
SURPRISE, DODO.
AIN'T YOU HEARD, NOTHIN' CAN CRUSH THE HULK.
THANK HEAVEN FOR SMALL FAVORS.
AIE OWW!
I COMPREHEND--FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FEEL--PHYSICAL PAIN!
BETTER GET USED TO IT, CHUM.
'CAUSE THERE'S A WHOLE LOT MORE COMIN' ATCHA!
THOOM
SHE--COLLAPSED THAT BUILDING!
NO--PLEASE--HAVE MERCY!
NICE MESS.
IF AH FIGURED RIGHT, MY AVALANCHE SHOULD HAVE BURIED "MAGGIE," WITHOUT DOIN' HIM ANY REAL HARM.
BUT IF AH'M WRONG--?!
ELSEWHERE...
I WILL GO ALONE THEN, IF I MUST. THE X-MEN ARE MY... FRIENDS. I WILL NOT BETRAY THAT NEWLY WON TRUST BY ABANDONING THEM.
I AM ASHAMED. I HAVE THOUGHT ONLY OF MYSELF, OF MY NEEDS AND DESIRES, UNCARING OF THE EFFECT THEY WOULD HAVE ON OTHERS.
I WILL HELP YOU, MAGNETO, WHATEVER THE RISK.
WE MUST FIRST CAST OFF THESE COSMETIC REPLICATIONS OF OUR HUMAN FORMS, AND REVERT TO THE PURE ENERGY STATES THAT ARE OUR NATURAL SELVES WITHIN THIS CYBERNETIC COSMOS.
THEN--PROJECT OUR MERGED ESSENCES ACROSS THE VOID.

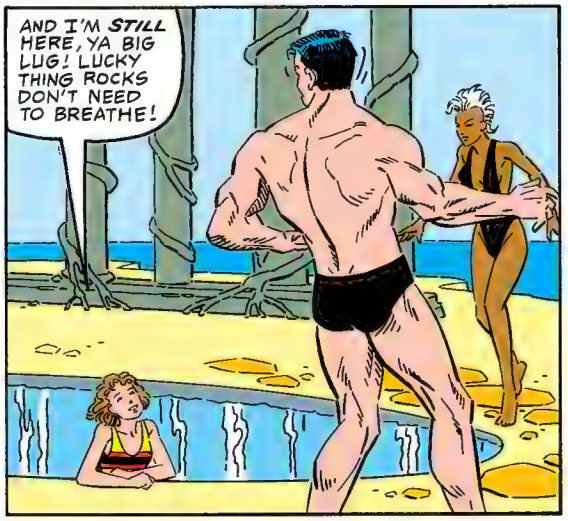

IT SEEMS SO FAR--MAGNETO, SOME FORCE RESISTS US!
THE SAME MALEVOLENCE I FELT WHEN I WAS DISPLACED!
WE MUST FIGHT IT, DURGAN!
I--DO NOT KNOW HOW!
REACH--WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND SOUL!
PROVE, MAN, THAT YOU--
--AND YOUR WORLD--
ARE WORTH SAVING!
I--LIVE!
I AM UNHARMED!
A REAL TRANSITORY CONDITION, CLOWN!..
...UNLESS YOU TELL ME--RIGHT QUICK--HOW TO PUT MAGNETO...
...BACK WHERE HE BELONGS!
AT THAT SAME MOMENT...
SUCCESS!
MAGNETO, WE'VE DONE IT!
PROPER ORDER IS BEING RESTORED THROUGHOUT MY NETWORK.
I FEEL MYSELF REGAINING CONTROL OF THE CHIEF EXAMINER. WHATEVER FORCE OPPOSED US IS NOW GONE. I CAN SCAN NO TRACE OF IT ANYWHERE.
BE CAREFUL, DURGAN, BE CERTAIN.
I SHALL. BUT BEFORE I DO ANYTHING FURTHER...
"...LET ME SEND YOU HOME."
YOU YOURSELF, BABE? OR DO I HAVE TO BOP YOU AGAIN?
I...AM, ROGUE.
AND I ADVISE YOU NOT TO TRY.

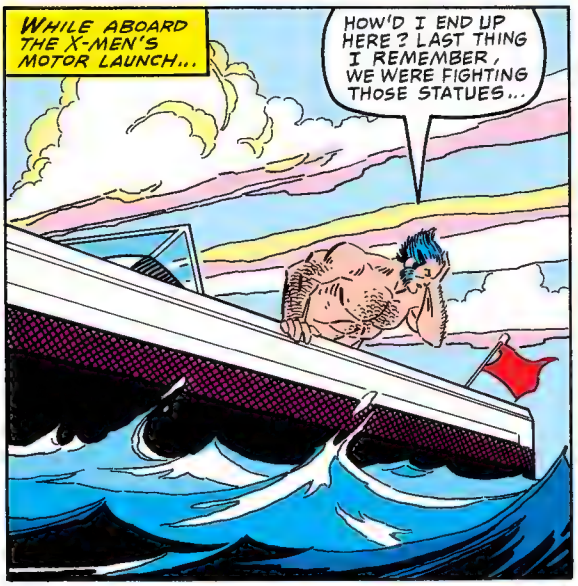
SOON...
...AFTER A GREAT MANY EXPLANATIONS...
ALL AH HAVE TO DO IS PASS THROUGH THAT MINI-MONOLITH?
AND YOU WILL BE RESTORED TO YOUR NORMAL SELF, YES.
IF YOU SAY SO.
KIND'A NEAT, THOUGH, WHILE IT LASTED--
--BEIN' MAYBE THE MOST POWERFUL BEING ON EARTH.
Whoooaa!
THAT WAS WILD!
MAGNETO, YOUR OWN ABILITIES ARE STILL NEEDED.
THE ANALYZER HAS BEEN RE-CALIBRATED TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER MALFUNCTION.
PLEASE.
THOUGH I WILL UNDERSTAND IF YOU REFUSE.
I GIVE FREELY OF MYSELF, DURGAN.
IN RETURN, I CHARGE THAT YOU THINK--TRULY THINK--ON WHAT YOU DO HERE.
AS ROGUE SAID, THE HEROES YOU PREVIOUSLY COPIED GAVE HER EXTRAORDINARY POWER. ADD TO THAT NOW, MY OWN.
WE HAVE LEARNED--SOMETIMES THROUGH HARD EXPERIENCE AND A BITTER COST--THE LIMITS OF WHO WE ARE, AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES.
YOUR DEVICE REPLICATES THE POWER, BUT NOT THE KNOWLEDGE.
BE CAREFUL NOT TO MISUSE IT.


WHAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS NO ACCIDENT. YOUR SYSTEM MAY NOT BE AS FOOLPROOF AS YOU BELIEVE. JUST BECAUSE YOU CANNOT FIND A THING DOES NOT MEAN IT IS NOT THERE.
FINALLY, ALL THIS COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED HAD YOU BUT APPROACHED US IN PEACE AND ASKED OUR HELP.
I WAS AFRAID YOU MIGHT REFUSE.
DURGAN, IF YOU TAKE A THING BY FORCE...
...WHEREIN ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM THE BLACK FLEET?

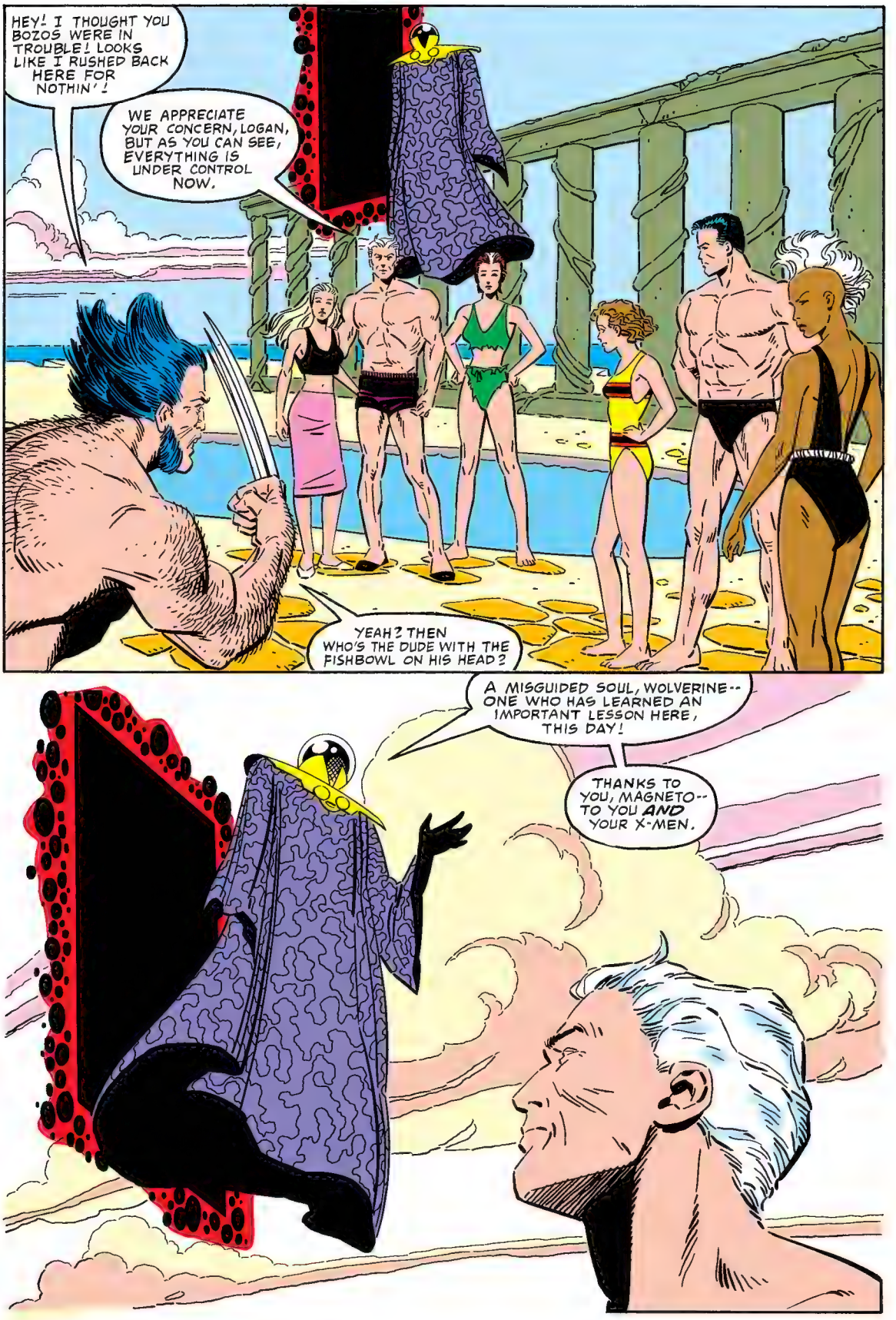

"YOUR POINTS ARE WELL TAKEN, MAGNETO. REST ASSURED THEY WILL BE ACTED UPON. IF A HOSTILE ROUTINE EXISTS, IT WILL BE PURGED. AND I WILL REMAIN EVER-VIGILANT FOR THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF ITS REAPPEARANCE."
I CHOSE MAGNETO BECAUSE I THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE A NATURAL AFFINITY FOR MY PLANS--BUT HE DIDN'T ACT AS EXPECTED!
CURSE THE HUMAN! IN THE FUTURE I MUST BE MORE CIRCUMSPECT--UNTIL DURGAN GROWS COMPLACENT...
...BELIEVING THE DANGER TO BE PAST.
...THEN WHEN HE LEAST SUSPECTS...
...I SHALL STRIKE!

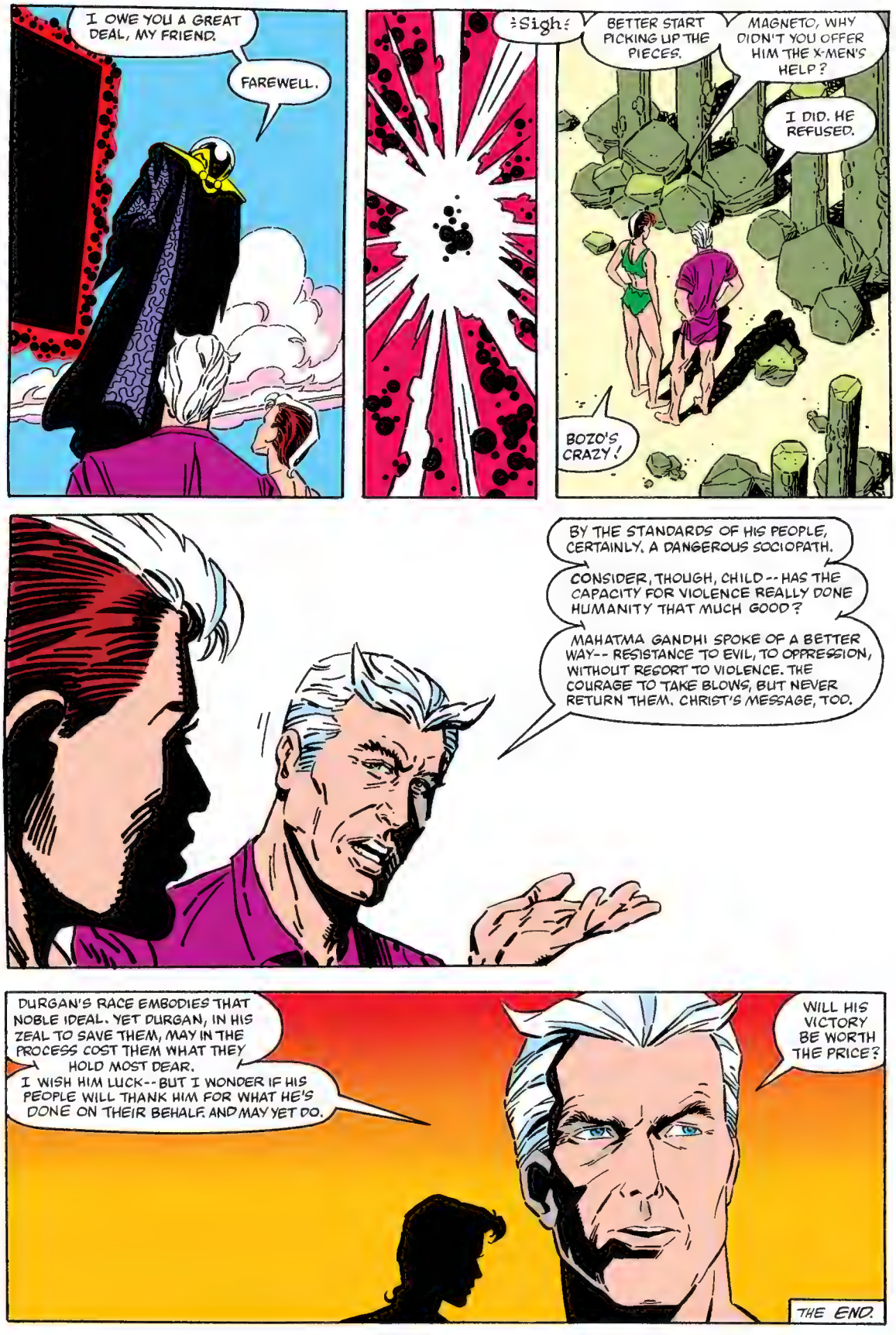

UNNH! I FEEL MYSELF BECOMING FLESH, AGAIN!
I, TOO, STORM, BUT KITTY--! SHE HAD FALLEN INTO THE POOL!


AND I'M STILL HERE, YA BIG LUG! LUCKY THING ROCKS DON'T NEED TO BREATHE!


WHILE ABOARD THE X-MEN'S MOTOR LAUNCH...
HOW'D I END UP HERE? LAST THING I REMEMBER, WE WERE FIGHTING THOSE STATUES...

BETTER HOT TAIL IT BACK TO THE ISLAND AND HOPE I AIN'T TOO LATE TO HELP MY BUDDIES!
'CAUSE IF I AM, SOMEONE'S GONNA PAY!


HEY! I THOUGHT YOU BOZOS WERE IN TROUBLE! LOOKS LIKE I RUSHED BACK HERE FOR NOTHIN'!
WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, LOGAN, BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL NOW.
YEAH? THEN WHO'S THE DUDE WITH THE FISHBOWL ON HIS HEAD?
A MISGUIDED SOUL, WOLVERINE-- ONE WHO HAS LEARNED AN IMPORTANT LESSON HERE, THIS DAY!
THANKS TO YOU, MAGNETO-- TO YOU AND YOUR X-MEN.


I OWE YOU A GREAT DEAL, MY FRIEND.
FAREWELL.
:Sigh:
BETTER START PICKING UP THE PIECES.
MAGNETO, WHY DIDN'T YOU OFFER HIM THE X-MEN'S HELP?
I DID. HE REFUSED.
BOZO'S CRAZY!
BY THE STANDARDS OF HIS PEOPLE, CERTAINLY. A DANGEROUS SOCIOPATH.
CONSIDER, THOUGH, CHILD -- HAS THE CAPACITY FOR VIOLENCE REALLY DONE HUMANITY THAT MUCH GOOD?
MAHATMA GANDHI SPOKE OF A BETTER WAY -- RESISTANCE TO EVIL, TO OPPRESSION, WITHOUT RESORT TO VIOLENCE. THE COURAGE TO TAKE BLOWS, BUT NEVER RETURN THEM. CHRIST'S MESSAGE, TOO.
DURGAN'S RACE EMBODIES THAT NOBLE IDEAL. YET DURGAN, IN HIS ZEAL TO SAVE THEM, MAY IN THE PROCESS COST THEM WHAT THEY HOLD MOST DEAR.
I WISH HIM LUCK -- BUT I WONDER IF HIS PEOPLE WILL THANK HIM FOR WHAT HE'S DONE ON THEIR BEHALF. AND MAY YET DO.
WILL HIS VICTORY BE WORTH THE PRICE?
THE END.

Cyclops pinup by Dave Sim
from *Marvel Fanfare* #25 (March 1986)

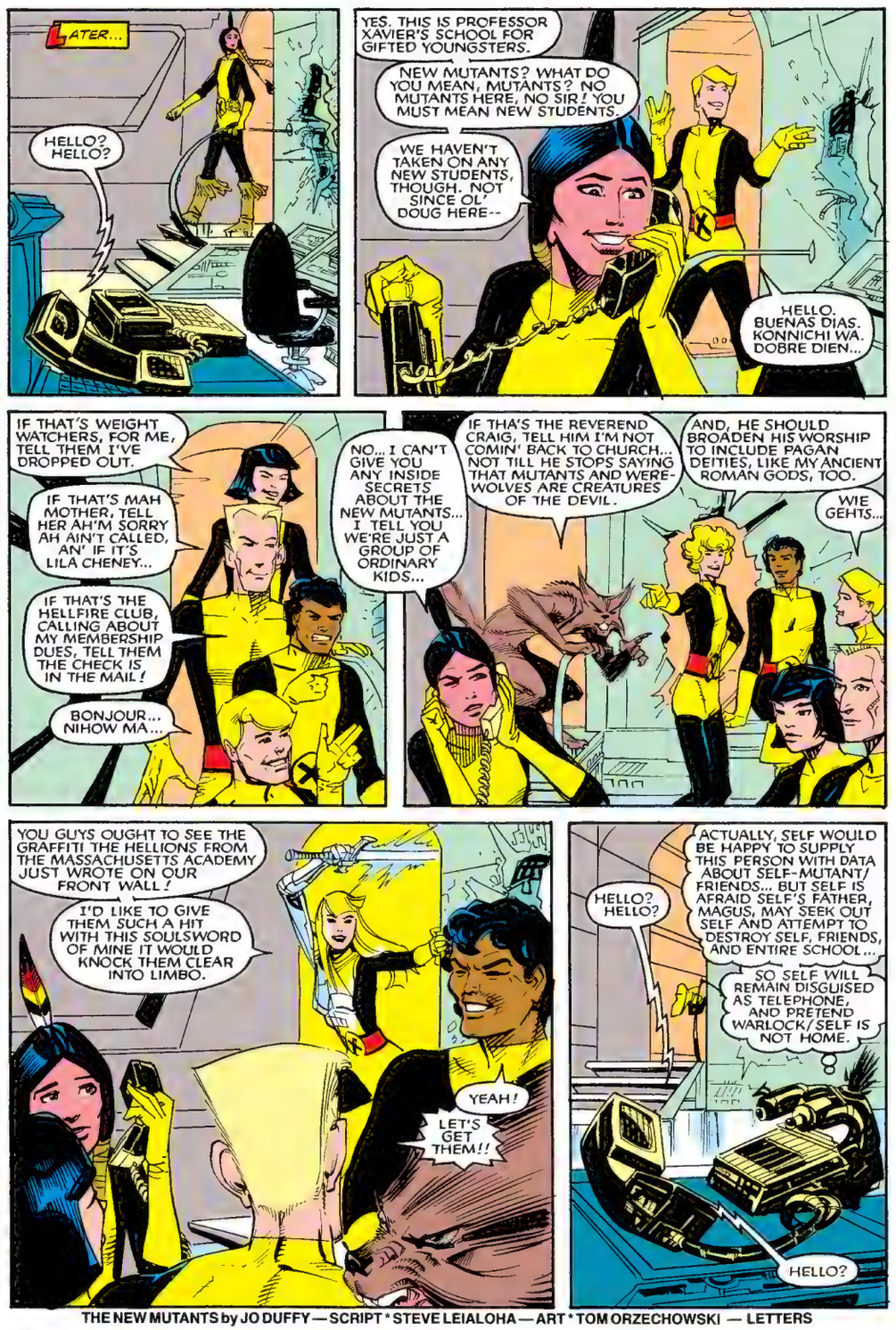
1986 *Marvel Press* Phoenix poster
by Rick Leonardi & Terry Austin

1986 *Marvel Press* Storm poster
by Bob Larkin

Marvel Age Annual #1 (1985) promoted Marvel's titles for 1986 and featured a "telephone" story "Information, Please…! Or When Destiny Calls!" by each series' creative team (with Jo Duffy and Ron Frenz pinch hitting for Chris Claremont and John Romita Jr.)

MEANWHILE...
VAS IST, HERR MAGNETO? IS CEREBRO GOING OFF? HAS IT DETECTED ANOTHER MUTANT SOMEWHERE IN THE WORLD... SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE AN ENEMY TO US...
... OR A VICTIM OF THE ANTI-MUTANT MADNESS AND HYSTERIA THAT IS AFFECTING THE ENTIRE NORMAL POPULACE OF THE WORLD?
BAMF!
HAS IT DETECTED SOME MUTANT WHO MIGHT JOIN US AS ONE OF THE X-MEN, FIGHTING TO RID THE WORLD OF EVIL MUTANTS?
SWORN TO PROTECT ORDINARY PEOPLE, DESPITE THE WAY THEY WOULD SHUN AND PERSECUTE US IF THEY REALIZED WHAT WE TRULY ARE?
NO... JUST THE PHONE. HELLO? PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...
IF WHOEVER THAT IS WANTS TO SPEAK TO THE TEAM LEADER, LET HIM TALK TO ME.
NO, ME!
NO... I'M AFRAID PROFESSOR XAVIER ISN'T HERE? NO... I DON'T THINK THERE'S MUCH POINT IN LEAVING A MESSAGE?
I'M THE NEW TEACHER... ER, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, FRED XAVIER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, AM I REALLY MAGNETO, MASTER OF MAGNETISM, NOTORIOUS MUTANT AND WANTED CRIMINAL?
NO, ME!
PREPOSTEROUS!
IF THAT'S SOMEONE WANTING TO HEAR ABOUT MY TERRIBLE PAST, IN THE FUTURE, TELL THEM I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT...
YOU'LL ALL FIND OUT ABOUT THAT, IF NIMROD, THE MUTANT KILLER FROM TOMORROW, EVER CATCHES UP WITH US.
HEY, MAGNETO, YOU BETTER GET OUTSIDE, OR THERE'LL BE TROUBLE.
WOLVERINE'S PLAYING TAG WITH ROGUE AGAIN.
HELLO? HELLO?

THE UNCANNY X-MEN by JO DUFFY — SCRIPT * RON FRENZ — PENCILS * DAN GREEN — INKS


LATER...
HELLO? HELLO?
YES, THIS IS PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
NEW MUTANTS? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MUTANTS? NO MUTANTS HERE, NO SIR! YOU MUST MEAN NEW STUDENTS.
WE HAVEN'T TAKEN ON ANY NEW STUDENTS, THOUGH. NOT SINCE OL' DOUG HERE--
HELLO. BUENAS DIAS. KONNICHI WA. DOBRE DIEN...
IF THAT'S WEIGHT WATCHERS, FOR ME, TELL THEM I'VE DROPPED OUT.
IF THAT'S MAH MOTHER, TELL HER AH'M SORRY AH AIN'T CALLED, AN' IF IT'S LILA CHENEY...
IF THAT'S THE HELLFIRE CLUB, CALLING ABOUT MY MEMBERSHIP DUES, TELL THEM THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL!
BONJOUR... NIHOW MA...
NO... I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY INSIDE SECRETS ABOUT THE NEW MUTANTS... I TELL YOU WE'RE JUST A GROUP OF ORDINARY KIDS...
IF THA'S THE REVEREND CRAIG, TELL HIM I'M NOT COMIN' BACK TO CHURCH... NOT TILL HE STOPS SAYING THAT MUTANTS AND WEREWOLVES ARE CREATURES OF THE DEVIL.
AND, HE SHOULD BROADEN HIS WORSHIP TO INCLUDE PAGAN DEITIES, LIKE MY ANCIENT ROMAN GODS, TOO.
WIE GEHTS...
YOU GUYS OUGHT TO SEE THE GRAFFITI THE HELLIONS FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY JUST WROTE ON OUR FRONT WALL!
I'D LIKE TO GIVE THEM SUCH A HIT WITH THIS SOULSWORD OF MINE IT WOULD KNOCK THEM CLEAR INTO LIMBO.
YEAH!
LET'S GET THEM!!
HELLO? HELLO?
ACTUALLY, SELF WOULD BE HAPPY TO SUPPLY THIS PERSON WITH DATA ABOUT SELF-MUTANT/FRIENDS... BUT SELF IS AFRAID SELF'S FATHER, MAGUS, MAY SEEK OUT SELF AND ATTEMPT TO DESTROY SELF, FRIENDS, AND ENTIRE SCHOOL...
SO SELF WILL REMAIN DISGUISED AS TELEPHONE, AND PRETEND WARLOCK/SELF IS NOT HOME.
HELLO?

THE NEW MUTANTS by JO DUFFY — SCRIPT * STEVE LEIALOHA — ART * TOM ORZECHOWSKI — LETTERS

Marvel Age #38 (May 1986), "The Mutant Report," interview with *The Uncanny X-Men* artists John Romita Jr. and Dan Green, by Bill Slavicsek

X-TRA THE MUTANT REPORT X-TRA

VOLUME 1 "The Next Step in News Evolution" NUMBER 9

The John Romita, Jr. and Dan Green Stories

You've followed their work on the X-men for over two years now, marveling at the powerful renderings and exciting visual images that have become their trademark. But what do you really know about the art team that chronicles the adventures of everyone's favorite team of mutants?

Here, for the first time in the same article, are the complete stories behind the people behind the pretty pictures. All the deep secrets and dark rumors are exposed and brought to light for your reading pleasure. Yes, JR, that's right Dan, these are your lives!

(Actually, there are very few deep secrets and only a couple of dark rumors. Sometimes we just get carried away!)

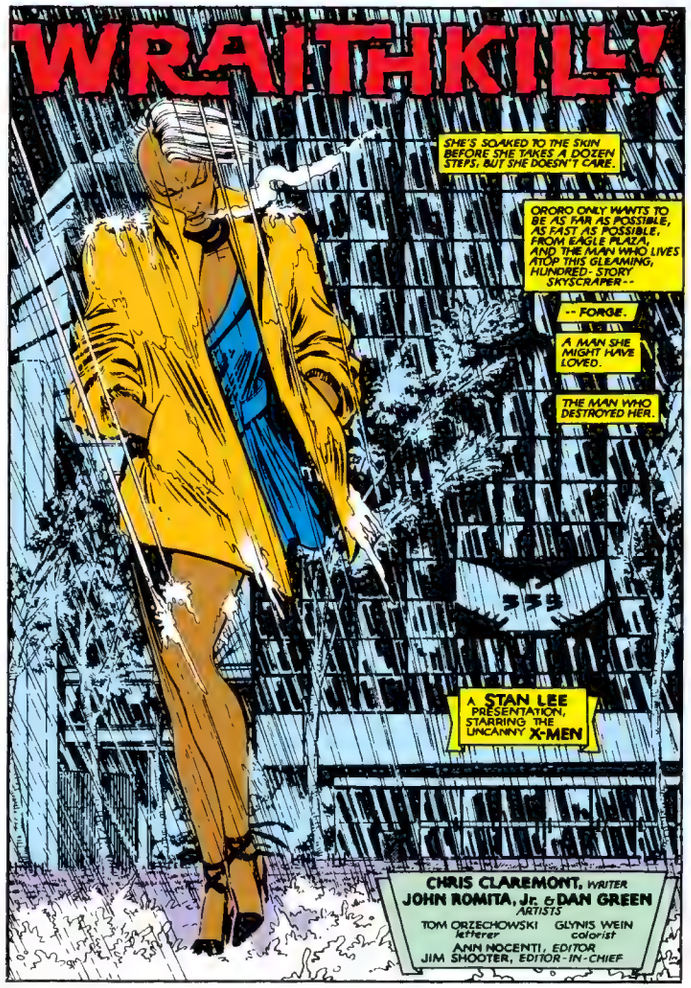
J.R., JR.

John Romita, Jr., the penciler of the X-MEN, started out on the road to comic book illustration by majoring in advertising at Farmingdale University. "The program pretty much covered the spectrum of art and gave me a rather complete education for a two year school," explained John.

Being the son of an artist perhaps best known for his work on a certain spider-powered super hero, John always thought in the back of his mind that he might one day work for Marvel. "But at the same time, I didn't really believe that it would happen," said John. "Against my father's wishes I came here and got a job doing cover sketches and the like for the British department."

An opening in the Marvel's magazine department followed and John was kept busy doing production work and "everything else you can think of," he explained. "It was a great learning experience and really helped introduce me to the company."

Two years later the powers that be offered John an opportunity to


WRAITHKILL!
SHE'S SOAKED TO THE SKIN BEFORE SHE TAKES A DOZEN STEPS; BUT SHE DOESN'T CARE.
ORORO ONLY WANTS TO BE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, FROM EAGLE PLAZA, AND THE MAN WHO LIVES ATOP THIS GLEAMING, HUNDRED-STORY SKYSCRAPER--
--FORGE.
A MAN SHE MIGHT HAVE LOVED.
THE MAN WHO DESTROYED HER.
A STAN LEE PRESENTATION, STARRING THE UNCANNY X-MEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER
JOHN ROMITA, Jr. & DAN GREEN ARTISTS
TOM ORZECHOWSKI letterer
GLYNIS WEIN colorist
ANN NOCENTI, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

pencil IRON MAN. "Marvel doesn't believe in nepotism, but they don't believe in anti-nepotism either. I got a chance and things just snowballed from there," said John.

"Actually, my first penciling job was a six-page back-up SPIDER-MAN story that was a disaster," John clarified. "Fortunately, (inker) Al Milgrom saved it for me. That was only a few months before the IRON MAN opening."

In the eight years that John has worked for Marvel, he has never considered a specific style. "I just do what I do and whatever style comes out is totally unconscious," he said. "As for my ability as an artist, it's gotten better since I started. I think there's been marked improvement since that first SPIDER-MAN filler. You know, Dan Green was the first guy who inked me on IRON MAN. I guess we've kind of come full circle. He can attest to my improvement. He's had to *struggle* over some of my work over these past few years."

Even though John's happy with his improvement, he still feels he has a long way to go. "I still want to become the best artist at Marvel, but it could take another 10 years."

Currently John is sharing the art duties on the UNCANNY X-MEN with Dan Green. How does John feel about working with mutants after two years on the book? "I love the X-MEN," he said. "It's such a great challenge because there are so many characters and each of them is so different. They are deep, complex characters, and that's a compliment to Chris Claremont. He's the best writer I've ever worked with over a long period of time. He's made me better over the last two years than I could have become working on any other book because of the type of story vehicle he has made it."

It's been said that there is a two year burn out inherent in the series, that people fall apart after long periods of work on the X-Men. "I've heard that," laughed John. "Over the time that I've worked on it I've seen the struggle. You know, artists' blocks. Chris has had it and I've had it. But I want to conquer it before it conquers me. I want to get to the point where there is nowhere higher for me to go with the book, and then I'll move on. But at the present time I'm very happy with THE X-MEN. It's a great challenge and I'm going to stick around for awhile."

The entire creative team gets along very well, explained John. "I enjoy working with Chris tremen-

dously and Ann Nocenti is a great editor. I've worked with Dan before and I would like to continue that relationship for as long as he likes. I think he's one of the best inkers at Marvel."

John has only minor input into the stories, adding things like expressions and little, everyday occurences through the art. He adds little "street things and tiny nuances that Chris might not be familiar with." Although Chris seems to have an endless supply of plots and story ideas, John has let him know that he has a "whole head full of ideas" that he'll throw his way whenever the need may arise. "I've got a couple of years worth of stuff," said John.

"I have aspirations to do a complete book by myself someday," he confided. "I'd like to take a story from plot to script to pencils to inks. You know, after I got out of college I attempted to write a novel. I never quite got through it, but I think I could handle comic book writing. But it would take awhile, just like it took awhile for me to become a decent penciler. But first I'd like to conquer penciling, then inking, then maybe I'll take a crack at writing."

When asked about his partner in art, John has only praise for inker Dan Green. "Dan brings style and polish to my work that I don't think I have. He adds to my style, if you can say I have a style. My pencils are of as much quality as anyone else's, but Dan polishes everything I do. I think the word embellisher fits him perfectly. He's an all-around great artist who adds his artistic talent to my work."

"You'll see how good he is when his DOCTOR STRANGE Graphic Novel comes out," John explained. "It's absolutely gorgeous. As for his inking, better than others I've worked with, he lets me show through his inking. There's a great combination of him and me in his inks. I don't think anybody else has come close to his work with regards to my pencils."

The creative team really got closer when they went to Paris to research the special X-MEN #200. One day while joking with Marvel's editor in chief Jim Shooter, it was mentioned that it would be nice to actually see some of the international locations that are used in the series. "We did it totally on a lark, never considering that we'd be going," laughed John. "Jim left the office, came back an hour later, and the next thing we knew we were on our way."

John, Dan, Chris and Ann were sent on a two week trip to London and Paris. "The trip was exceptional," John said. "It was the two most fun weeks I've had in my life. The book was already in the works and we went over there for location shots and to get a general feel of the city. We took tons of photographs and picked up volumes of research material. Nothing was faked and I think it shows in the finished product. I hope people realize the effort that went into it because Chris, Dan and I worked hard on that book. We're proud of how it turned out."

Of course, John admits that he'd give his right pinky to go somewhere else like that again. "I don't know if we'd ever be considered for something like this again, but we did function for the company as well as ourselves. We were good examples and left good impressions on the people we met."

Like every other humble comic artist in the business, John Romita, Jr. has "visions of greatness." Like everybody else, he has "a level of expectation that I hope someday to come close to. But the difference between me and a lot of other people is that I'm a stickler for detail. My aspirations may be high, but my expectations of myself are even higher."

Asked to describe himself, John said, "I'm a heck of a nice guy, lots of fun, I want everyone to be as happy as I am, and I want to have about five kids—all boys! Of course, I may have to hurry and get married first!"

John has a desire to do a Graphic Novel and a Limited Series, but on the horizon right now is just THE X-MEN. "When I retire I'd like to be able to say I did everything I wanted to do," he explained. "one of those things is to do at least a couple of issues of every book Marvel publishes."

"Every bit of professional happiness I have is owed to Marvel," John confessed. "They are wonderful people to work for and all the people that work here are just great. Everybody should enjoy working for a company as much as I enjoy working for Marvel."

And that positive feeling comes out in every issue of THE UNCANNY X-MEN.

DAN GREEN

Dan Green started in the comic book business in 1971, working for DC. Unlike John Romita, Jr., Dan didn't get much formal training. "I took all the basic art courses in high school, but I was basically self-taught," he explained. "I moved to New York from Southern California to attend the School of Visual Arts, but I didn't stay with the school long. It was a very expensive playground that I couldn't afford."

Money was a necessity at the time, so Dan went out and got a job with an advertising agency. He then spent a year putting together samples with a goal of breaking into the comics business.

"I didn't know much technically about comics in terms of the doing of them," Dan confessed. "As a kid I had collected comics and I was drawn toward the idea of doing that as a way to make a living. It was a goal that I had from childhood."

So with portfolio in hand, Dan decided to give it a shot and he began making the rounds. And getting rejected.

"Sure I got rejected, but I also got plenty of good criticism," he explained. "I kept plugging away at it until I finally got some work." That work was doing short back-up features for DC's mystery comics. Two years later he was at Marvel, inking Jim Starlin's CAPTAIN MARVEL. "I was inexperienced and young and very slow as a penciler, so I decided to focus on inking."

Over the years, Dan has also had a hand in a few art portfolio collections. "I did a piece for an Edgar Rice Burrough's Portfolio. It was a great experience having a piece in the same collection with work by Jeff Jones, Berni Wrightson, and others. A second general fantasy portfolio followed that, and there's a full color portfolio available now. That one also has work by Jay Muth, Kent Williams, Berni, Jeff, and some others. The subject is basically fantasy women for no other reason exept we all like to paint women," Dan said.

But getting back to comics, how difficult was it for Dan to break into the field? "There's no easy way to get into comics," he explained. "The field is certainly wide open and people will look at your work. I found them very receptive as I made my rounds, and they spent a reasonable amount of time looking at my stuff and critiquing it. You just have to put in those hours of practice. By the time I got work I still really didn't know what I was doing. It was sort of hit or miss."

Part of Dan's problem as a penciler is that he takes a long time. "That's because I tend to over-research things. It takes me time just to get the feeling of what I have to draw," he said. "If a story is taking place in an exotic setting, I'll research the place to death. It's overkill, but it's the way I tend to do things."

One of Dan's biggest breaks was being noticed by Al Williamson. He was one of Dan's heroes and Dan did a piece of work at DC in Al's illustrative style. "I later got a call from Al who had seen the work and liked it. He asked me to help him on the newspaper strip work he was doing. It was awhile later, but I finally went to do some work with Al. It lasted two years and working with him was a great learning experience," he said.

What does Dan try to bring to the pencils he inks? "I've always been more interested in maintaining the quality of the pencils' character and the individual penciler's style than adding anything of my own," Dan explained. "That was always the main thing in my mind whenever I approached a new job. I try to understand what the penciler is trying to do and faithfully capture that while not turning it into my own work."

Only since working on The X-MEN has Dan started putting a little more of a stylistic touch to the inking. "But I still try to maintain the integrity of the art," he explained.

Dan said his work has changed only slightly over the years, as now he has integrated pens into his inking. He started out using only a brush. "When I started learning how to use a brush I looked at Berni Wrightson's stuff. I loved the way he inked and he was the role model for my technique."

THE X-MEN is where Dan currently shows off his considerable talents. "I think our work on THE X-MEN is pretty good, judging from the kind of feedback we get on it," Dan said. "My aspect of it varies from issue to issue—even panel to panel—because John pencils very concisely. He's gotten to the point where he knows what I'm going to do with his work and he doesn't have to be as concerned with certain things because he knows that I understand what he means."

"Sometimes John's pencils are very tight, sometimes they're not as tight," Dan explained. "What I do is add the blacks and the textures and the line quality, because John doesn't pencil with that in mind. He's real open to interpretation and I think that shows when other people ink him. There are certain inkers who don't ink him very well. I think I ink him quite well and I know he's pleased with the job I do."

Dan had to skip a number of issues when they returned from the Paris trip however, in order to finish his long awaited DOCTOR STRANGE Graphic Novel. "It was supposed to come out in 1984, then in 1985, and now it looks like it will be out in early 1986. It's written by Marc DeMatteis and co-plotted by the two of us. I'm doing the entire art job by myself."

The problem came about because Dan, when he left the DOCTOR STRANGE bi-monthly series to concentrate on the Graphic Novel, was offered something he just couldn't refuse—the inking chores for THE X-MEN.

"I initially had no plans to stay on the book for any extended period of time," Dan explained. "It's been a little more than two years now and that really threw my time schedule into a spin. Everybody has been real patient in regards to the Graphic Novel, but I finally had to take some time to concentrate solely on it. I'm doing it as water color paintings, so it's not the same process as working on THE X-MEN. It's not the old pencil-ink-color process."

In water color, Dan works from minimal to tight pencils, then goes right into the painting. "There's no line work per se, so it's a whole different mentality," he explained. "It's tough to go back and forth between the two processes."

Although he hated to drop the X-MEN for so long, he thinks the break has been good for him. "And I had lots of fun doing the painting for DOCTOR STRANGE," he said.

Now Dan is just looking forward to settling back in as inker on THE X-MEN and watching the reaction to his work on the Graphic Novel. We're all looking forward to those things, too.

—Bill Slavicsek

The Uncanny X-Men #201, page 2 original art
by Rick Leonardi & Whilce Portacio

X-MEN 201 2
2
TRULY, A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK. TELL ME, IS IT A BOY OR A GIRL?
A BOY, SILLY MAN.
CAN'T YOU TELL, NIGHT-CRAWLER?
BIG FLAMIN' DEAL. YOU SEEN ONE BRAT, YOU SEEN 'EM ALL.
SPAR
TO THINK, WOLVERINE-- YOU, ALSO, ONCE LOOKED LIKE THAT.
I WONDER, COMRADES, HOW HE WILL FEEL, GROWING UP WITH SUCH AS WE FOR GODPARENTS?
BLESSED, OF COURSE, COLOSSUS!
THE DEAR LAD COULD DO A LOT WORSE--
--IN BOTH LOOKS AND MANNERS--
--THAN TAKE AFTER ME!!!
GIVE US A BREAK, FUZZY-ELF!
BAMF!
OHO, RACHEL--
--USE YOUR TELEKINETIC POWERS AGAINST ME, WILL YOU?!
THAT, LEIBCHEN, MEANS WAR!
NIGHT-CRAWLER, NO FAIR!
Oh PLEASE HA HA HA DON'T TICKLE hee I CAN'T STAND IT HO HO I'LL GET YOU tee hee FOR THIS HEEHAHO I MEAN IT BEAST CREEP NOT THE TAIL ROTTEN MEAN BRUTE!!!
SHOULD WE INTERFERE?
RAY'S A BIG GIRL, COLOSSUS.
SHE CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.
2

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Uncanny X-Men #201, page 17 original art
by Rick Leonardi & Whilce Portacio

X-MEN 201 24
24
OKAY-- I'LL PUT MYSELF IN HER SHOES, THINK LIKE SHE DOES, TRY TO FIGURE OUT HER NEXT MOVE.
SHE'S BLOCKING MY OPTIC BEAM WITH MY OWN ARM!
ZOT!
17

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Uncanny X-Men #201, page 19 original art
by Rick Leonardi & Whilce Portacio

X-MEN 201 27
I WAS LUCKY.
I'VE GOT TO STOP DAY-DREAMING...
...OR I'M IN BIG TROUBLE!
WHY CAN'T I FIGURE STORM OUT?
WHERE IS SHE?!
WHAT IS SHE GOING TO DO?!!
THE RESERVATIONS ARE MADE, BABY.
THIS TIME TOMORROW WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY HOME.
I WANT SCOTT TO LOSE, SO HE'LL BE COMING WITH US. EXCEPT LOSING WILL BREAK HIS HEART.
Oh, WHY CAN'T IT BE BECAUSE HE WANTS TO, INSTEAD OF BECAUSE HE HAS NO OTHER CHOICE?
BUT NONE OF THIS HAS ANY MEANING TO YOU, DOES IT, SWEET-PEA?
BBBARA BOOM
SO LONG AS YOU'RE FED AND WARM--AND LOVED--YOU'RE HAPPY.
WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY.
Hmnh?!?
THE SKY WAS PERFECTLY CLEAR A MINUTE AGO.
WHERE'D THIS STORM COME FROM?!
19

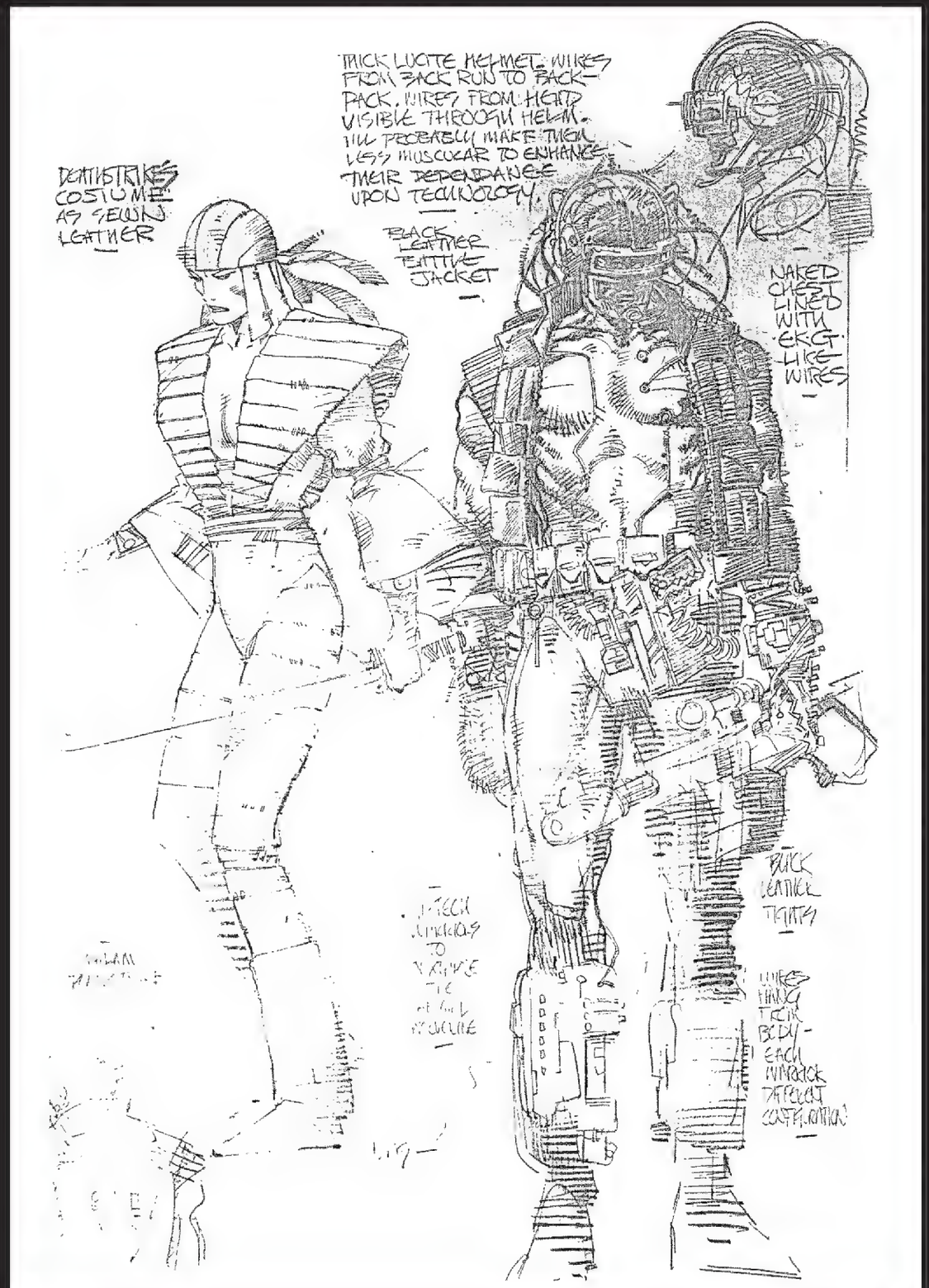
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Uncanny X-Men #201, page 20 original art
by Rick Leonardi & Whilce Portacio

X-MEN 201 28
28
SHE'S BEHIND ME--
--MISSED!
ZPAM!
MY VISOR!
GOT IT!
HAVE TO KEEP MY EYES CLOSED--AND COVERED! THE RUBY QUARTZ LENS IN MY VISOR IS MY SOLE MEANS OF CONTROLLING MY OPTIC BLASTS! WITHOUT IT...
YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY HELPLESS, CYCLOPS--YOU DARE NOT UNLEASH YOUR EYE-BEAMS WITHOUT RISKING KILLING EVERYONE AROUND YOU!
OUR DUEL IS OVER.
THE BEST X-MAN WON, STORM.
CONGRATULATIONS.
AND GOOD LUCK.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
I'M DREAMING! THIS ISN'T HAPPENING!
I LOST.
I DON'T LIKE IT-- BUT I'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT.
THERE'S NO MORE PLACE FOR ME HERE.
I WONDER, AFTER ALL I'VE SAID AND DONE, IF THERE'S ANY NOW WITH MADELYNE?
20

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Uncanny X-Men #205, Lady Deathstrike and Reaver character designs
by Barry Windsor-Smith


THICK LUCITE HELMET. WIRES FROM BACK RUN TO BACK-PACK. WIRES FROM HEAD VISIBLE THROUGH HELM. WILL PROBABLY MAKE THEM LESS MUSCULAR TO ENHANCE THEIR DEPENDANCE UPON TECHNOLOGY.
DEATHSTRIKES COSTUME AS SEWN LEATHER
BLACK LEATHER TATTIVE JACKET
NAKED CHEST LINED WITH EKG-LIKE WIRES
BLACK LEATHER TIGHTS
LINES HUGG TECH BODY - EACH NUMBERS DIFFERENT CONFIGURATION

The Uncanny X-Men #207, page 1 original art
by John Romita Jr. & P. Craig Russell

X 207 1
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
PHOENIX!
EACH BREATH IS FOULED BY SMOKE, EACH THOUGHT BY SILENT SCREAMS OF AGONY AND GRIEF.
IN HER CHILDHOOD, THIS CITY WAS A MAGIC PLACE, FULL OF LIFE AND LIGHT AND WONDER.
NOW IT'S A CHARNEL PIT-- HOME OF THE DEAD AND THOSE ABOUT TO DIE.
AND SHE HELPED MAKE IT SO.
ART: JOHN ROMITA JR. & DAN GREEN
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
TOM ORZECHOWSKI LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
DON'T BE SAME
59th

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DAN GREEN 3/3/87

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Marvel Age #43 (October 1986) featured artist Louis Williams' tryout pages from *The Uncanny X-Men* #207, pages 1-2. Williams would go on to pencil *Daredevil*.

The Uncanny X-Men #207, page 2 pencil art
as interpreted by Louis Williams

The Uncanny X-Men #209, page 21 original art
by John Romita Jr. & P. Craig Russell

X-MEN 209 29.
HARRY LELAND SEES THE FLASH OF SHAW'S IMPACT...
...AND AS THAT BLINDING GLOW FADES...
...SO AT LAST DOES THE SPARKLE FROM HIS EYES.
FAT MAN HAD HIS FAULTS...
...BUT HE MADE HIS EXIT WITH STYLE.
SHAW STILL BREATHING?
DA, WOLVERINE-- BUT HE IS UN-CONSCIOUS.
GET HIM CLEAR.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.
SNIKT
THE CLAWS ARE FORGED OF PURE ADAMANTIUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN, ABLE TO CUT SOLID STEEL AS EASILY AS BUTTER.
BUT BEFORE WOLVERINE CAN USE THEM...
FTASSP!
SUCKER DID IT TO US AGAIN! TELEPORTED HIMSELF TO SAFETY THE MINUTE WE HAD HIM ON THE ROPES.
EACH TIME, HE GETS THAT MUCH HARDER TO BEAT.
WE DON'T FIND A WAY TO NAIL HIM-- ONCE AND FOR ALL, AND SOON-- IT'LL BE OUR TURN.
STORM-- DO YOU HEAR? SIRENS! THE POLICE!
THE LORDS CARDINAL CAN NO MORE AFFORD TO BE FOUND HERE THAN YOU X-MEN. I OFFER THE SANCTUARY OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB. LET THIS TRUCE LAST A LITTLE LONGER.
IN SHAW'S NAME, I GUARANTEE YOUR SAFE CONDUCT.
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, TESSA, I HAVE LITTLE ALTERNATIVE. LEAD ON.
21
P Craig Russell

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Marvel Age #29 (August 1985) *Longshot* feature
by Steve Ringgenberg

TAKE A CHANCE ON A . . .

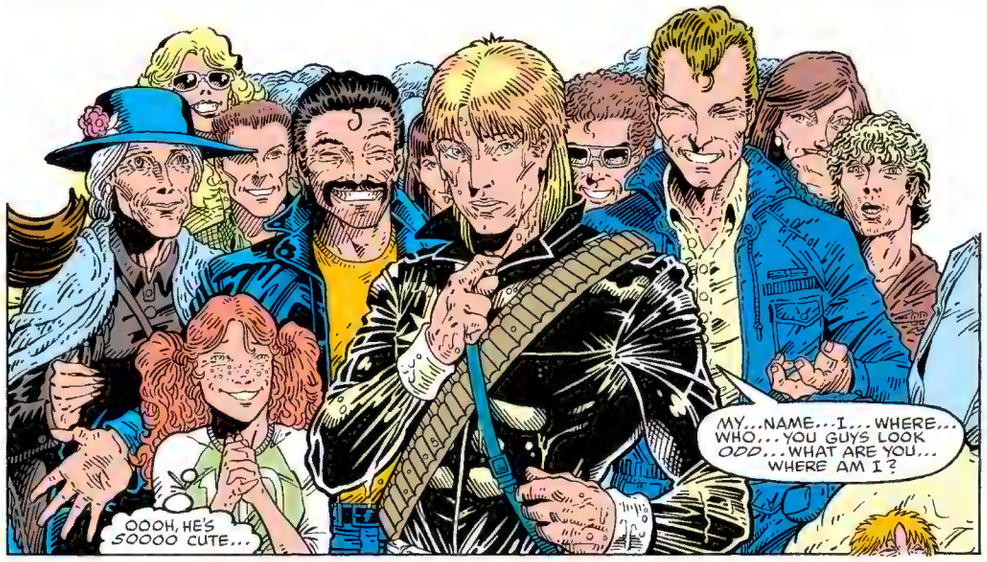
LONGSHOT™

by **Steve Ringgenberg**

So, you think you've seen every possible different type of super hero, every possible super-power? Are you ready for something *completely* different? Then how about an existential super hero? If that doesn't exactly push your thrill button, then how about a protagonist from another dimension who's absurdly, ridiculously lucky, but who has to deal with all the consequences of his outrageous luck? As you may have already guessed, **LONGSHOT**, a new six issue Limited Series written by **Ann Nocenti**, penciled by **Art Adams**, inked by **Whilce Portacio** and edited by **Louise Simonson**, is not easily classifiable. It's safe to say that **LONGSHOT** doesn't resemble anything that's gone before it. "**LONGSHOT**," states **Ann**, "is the idea of stripping someone of everything that they are," an idea she freely admits she borrowed from the existentialists. "I never read comics," she continues, "so the idea of a hero to me was different. I couldn't think of it in terms of a 'super hero' hero. I thought of it more as a conceptual hero."

"Not having a comic book background, I tend to come up with the metaphysics before I come up with the characters. I knew that I wanted to deal with the metaphysics of luck. It was a concept that interested me . . . what luck is, what probability is, how you could shift probabilities towards yourself. What are the repercussions of that? So, I did a character centered around that idea . . . **Longshot** has access to probabilities and luck. He's *lucky*, he's miraculous in a way . . . he was born with this talent to have access to being lucky, and the problem is that he finds out that there's a flip side to luck. There are repercussions. If you pull probabilities towards yourself, you're probably taking them away from other people, so it's actually something he shouldn't even be doing."

Another, even more fascinating aspect of **Longshot's** mystical powers is his ability to read the psychic imprint left behind on material objects: "**Longshot** can read an object, tell where it's been, where it's going to go. He can tell the future in the present in an object, tell who made it, tell if somebody is going to die by it someday. It depends . . . if you picked up a hammer and used it to bang nails every day and



Longshot went to read it, he may not read much off of it, but if it was used to kill somebody, that would leave a bigger psychic imprint . . . even if somebody held an object and cried over it, he would feel that too. If someone's emotional or intense enough around an object, they'll imprint it stronger, so he can read that."

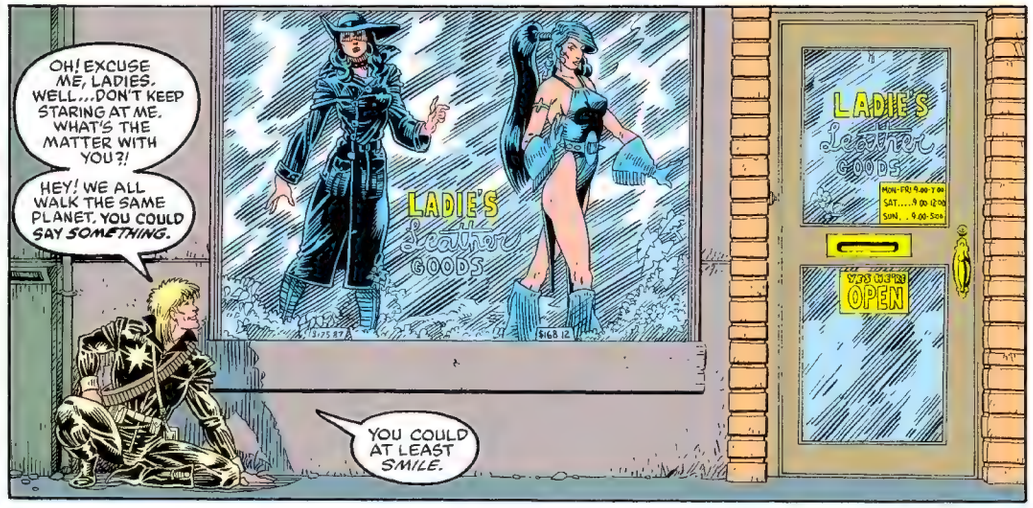
But, even with his amazing powers, **Longshot** starts his adventures as a total mystery, even to himself. **Ann** describes him as: "a clean slate. He has no memories, no past, no name, no nothing . . . In a sense, what I was trying to do was strip somebody down to where he had none of the crutches that we normally have. Memory, in a way, is a crutch, or your name, or what you believe you are." So, **Longshot's** odyssey begins with some very basic questions: Who is he? Why is he here? Ultimately, he goes on a quest for his past and finds it in search of him.

But, even before **Longshot's** mysterious past catches up with him, he'll begin to get vague inklings of its presence: "He has flashbacks and ghost images of a past that keeps creeping up on him. He'll touch an object and it'll remind him of something. There's an imprint of his mind still in his brain and it's slowly coming back . . . but, it's so subtle, I don't really bang anything over anybody's head, so I don't know if people will get any of this stuff."

As **Ann** explains it: "**Longshot** comes from another dimension, and he drags a whole cast of interdimensional beings with him. They get stuck between dimensions so they're neither here nor there." Some of these interdimensional beings pursue **Longshot** throughout the Limited Series, but they are only a small part of the cast of dozens of bizarre supporting characters whom **Longshot** meets during his strange odyssey. The villains are obviously among the most memorable characters in the series, as attested by **Ann's** observation: "**Chris Claremont** saw a picture of one of the characters and we've decided to have her join **the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants**, so she'll actually be in **the X-Men** before **Longshot's** even out."

One of the oddest characters is also one of the first ones you'll meet: "There's this little puppy who's his first friend and who is a magic magnet. The longer he stays on this world, the more magic he draws into him, so every issue he changes and evolves and gets bigger and bigger and bigger." The first *human* supporting character you encounter is a crazed survivalist living in upstate New York, which is where **Longshot** just happens to pop into our dimension. **Ann** describes **Longshot's** human mentor as "extremely paranoid, and believes the world is going to blow up any minute." Because **Longshot** hasn't an inkling of how to cope with human society, the survivalist takes him into his shelter and sets about correcting his abysmal ignorance. **Longshot**, literally, "has to learn everything all over again," for instance: "He doesn't know what money is. Somebody tells him to get some money, but he doesn't even know what it is." **Longshot** tries to remedy his poor cash flow situation, but because of his inexperience, he takes the advice of the survivalist, who, of course, gives him paranoid advice. After encountering this looney tune in the first issue, "**Longshot** acts off of paranoid information . . . which is based in fact, but ultimately paranoid, so he gets himself into trouble trying to rob Con Ed." As if that wasn't bad enough, the second issue introduces **Longshot** to the entity called **Jinx**, so named for reasons that quickly become obvious. **Jinx** is **Longshot's** polar opposite: "Someone who's totally pessimistic, who just wants to die.

ALL HATE YOU...YOU TORE US FROM OUR WORLD!
YOU KNOW ME?! WHO AM I?! TELL ME WHO I AM!?
YOU KNOW! I'LL RIP DOWN YOUR LYING THROAT! YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE. WE'RE GOING BACK... BUT WE'LL LEAVE YOU BEHIND!


OH! EXCUSE ME, LADIES. WELL...DON'T KEEP STARING AT ME. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?!
HEY! WE ALL WALK THE SAME PLANET. YOU COULD SAY SOMETHING.
LADIE'S Leather GOODS
YOU COULD AT LEAST SMILE.
LADIE'S Leather GOODS
OPEN

The whole issue he keeps trying to kill himself, and **Longshot** is trying to keep this guy from killing himself and teach him that life's worth living . . . "

So, after trying to rob Con Ed, **Longshot** next tries to make an honest living as a stuntman, which brings **Ricochet Rita** into his life. **Ricochet Rita**," says her creator, is "an exaggerated version of **Longshot**. She's a rodeo baby who really can't exist outside of a spotlight . . . she thrives on the spotlight, so she becomes a stuntgirl." Working as a stuntman enables **Longshot** to use his luck-drawing power in a unique way — he and **Rita**, "do million dollar, high-risk stunts that no one else is suicidal enough to do."

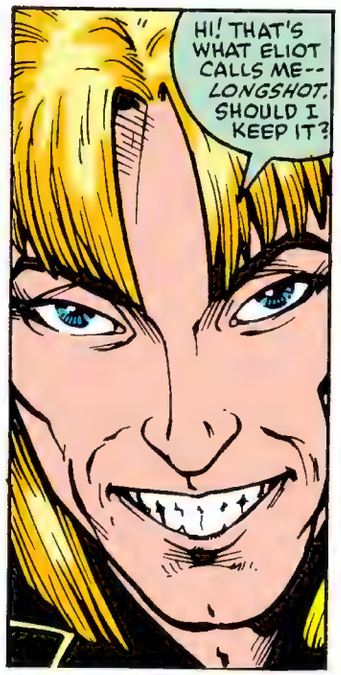
Because of his unique abilities, and the kind of power he gives off, **Longshot** quickly comes to the attention of Marvel's Sorcerer Supreme, **Dr. Strange**. **Strange** enters the story when he notices "people of incredible mystical power popping into our dimension." Intrigued, **Dr. Strange** "tracks it to its source and becomes interested in **Longshot** because he recognizes that this person is in the middle of this phenomenon of luck." **Longshot's** luck drawing powers also bring him to the attention of **Spider-Man** and **the She-Hulk**.

Bringing all of these characters to vivid life is **Art Adams**, a young penciler whose work on **LONGSHOT** is bound to make him a fan favorite. Although all of the concepts for **LONGSHOT** had been laid down by **Ann** by the time **Art** was brought in on the project, his sheer talent and youthful enthusiasm quickly made an impact on **LONGSHOT**. "What **Art** did," says collaborator **Ann**, "was give **Longshot** the face and the body language . . . exactly the way I pictured it, but to a point where I could evolve it further once I looked at the picture. The whole project probably would have gone in a different direction if it was another artist because **Art** also added a lot of good spirit to this project. He was as spirited as I was, because it was brand new for both of us to be creating something . . . there's not enough that you can say about what an artist adds when he finally draws the image, because the image starts to talk to you. He was just wonderful on the creative side."

Although he has been laboring behind the scenes for the last eighteen months, lavishing care and detail on the pages for **LONGSHOT**, **Art Adams** is largely an unknown quantity to Marvel fans. The bulk of his pre-**LONGSHOT** work consists of a few covers and a story he wrote and drew for **BIZARRE ADVENTURES** that he would rather the fans forgot about. Happily, however, **Art** is much more satisfied with the work he did on **LONGSHOT**. **Art's** inker on the book is **Whilce Portacio**, a name that Marvel fans might recognize from the credits of **ALIEN LEGION**. **Whilce** will be inking most issues of **LONGSHOT**, although **Art** will be handling his own inks for the last issue. And, in order to make the last issue even more special, **Art** confided that he intends to do a painting for the cover.

Given its complexity and uniqueness, a project like **LONGSHOT** does not simply happen. A top notch editor is always necessary to bring it from the idea stages to its publication. In this case, **Ann** is unsparing in her praise of editor **Louise Simonson**: "**Weezie** was essential in this whole project because I tend to throw lots of muddy concepts at her and she would sort them out for me. She had insight into what I was doing that I couldn't see myself . . . She's a brilliant editor. She would ask the right questions. She knows how to put her finger on it . . . She would focus things for me."

Comics fans who are looking for a daringly different kind of story should gamble on **LONGSHOT** — the odds are high that they'll find it a winner.

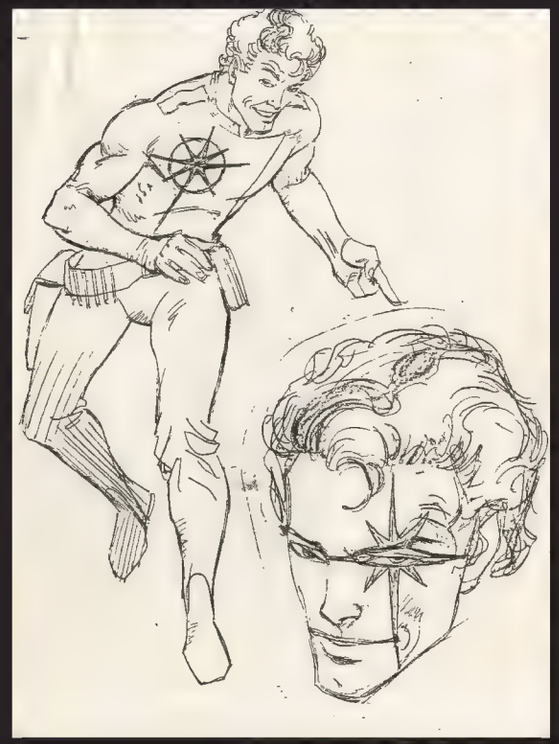


Ann Nocenti's *Longshot* series bible broke down the premise, plot and characters for the series and included an early Longshot character design by Carl Potts.

LONGSHOT

Who is Longshot?

That's what he'd like to know!



ORIGIN

We will imply that Longshot comes from a time/space several galaxies removed from Earth, but it will probably turn out that Darkmane 'let him out' of another dimension. His race has a warrior sect that studies and masters luck. Use luck right and it will gush, abuse it and it leaves you. They 'know' when things will run their way, like ESP. When greed comes into play, it masks one's ability to judge when 'luck' is on your side. So, odds go way down in probability.

The flip side of this luckyness is that his race is reckless and somewhat weak in character because they let luck decide right and wrong for them. They lean on a collective crutch. It is this 'luck metaphysics' that spit LongShot out, the way a body spits out something foreign. It was because he went too far one day in abusing luck. He has one last lucky streak, where he makes it to earth alive (with the accidental help of Darkmane). He is a fish out of water, out of the fear/luck enviornment he's used to. Without it, he has trouble 'breathing' or getting along. This is his purgatory, where he will learn about himself and the ways of man, and perhaps return to his people to teach them and fix the race.

A true man without a past, Longshot awakens in the world fully-formed. He is mature and worldly yet has no idea why or who he is or where he's from. He is disarmingly niave as to the ways of this particular world. He sees the world anew, with both the wonder and awe of a child, and the cutting insight of a stranger. He has no past to weigh him down. A clean slate.

Longshot is wildly lucky, and has a fast-track ride-rocket approach to life cause he can count on his luck to pull punches for him. He 'clicks' into a roll, a hot-streak, and rides it. But if he abuses that luck, it may turn on him. He has a give and take relationship with his power. His luck is ornery and has its own 'morality'. The luck is his morality. As he relies on the 'high metaphysics of luck' to keep him in check, the danger is that it could become a crutch, an addiction, like a gun you whip out so often that when it's out of bullets you find yourself helpless. Longshot's gun is fickle, it only works when his motive is pure. (if he tried to be malicious, or went too far trying to make money with his luck, it would leave him.)

He is a flawed hero. His incessent flirting with danger and death often inspires death to flirt back. One of his on-going dilemas is that he tends to get side-tracked and screw up so much while counting on his luck to pull through for him, that he inadvertently hurts people around him. Then he feels awful. As a stranger in a strange land, he is constantly struggling and stumbling thru our complicated and often meaningless taboos and traditions.

He takes life by storm, as with desperate frantic energy he tries to find out why the hell he's here in the first place. We get to like him, yet feel on edge cause this luck can't last. He's grossly deifying probability as he has his 'lucky streaks'.

All he remembers of his past is that he was an inter-galactic warrior; so he likes, needs and may be addicted to the sense-heightened state of fear.

All he's ever known is war. Life is and was war. What star-system, what time period, etc., remains a mystery. From this past existense, he learned to like fear. Fear is all he's known. It is literally a way of life. Fear heightened his senses, kept him on edge. He ever felt more alive than he did on the front lines. He constantly tries to re-create that heightened state of living. As a result he throws himself into dangerous situations. He can be like a fear-junkie. Then, like a bullfighter, he has to get out of the danger he himself invoked.

People resent his wild tactics and especially his success. As a warrior, and just like 'there are no atheists in foxholes'--he believes in a higher metaphysics, his 'god'. It manifests itself in his luck and his magic.

So we have a lucky alien, desperately searching for who he is. First issue would be him waking up, nameless and alone. First five issues would have a whimsical on-the-road wanderlust type feel to them. Reader gets to know and love him, then we have an origin issue where he learns he's from 'out there somewhere'. From then on we slowly drop clues as to his origin, but the whole picture may never be revealed. Or by then he may have changed too much to go back.

He is an alien who misses his people, but doesn't know who they are.

He also has magic. His magic is an extention of the powers that are inate in man, that a highly evolved man could concievably touch on --naturally integrated magic rather than showy stuff.

In some ways, he is the superman anyman can be. His magic is an extention of the magical things in life that man is almost on the edge of believing in. The things we see glimmers of out of the corners of our eyes, yet when we try to focus on them, they disappear. He can extent his mind in 'natural' ways, like seeing outside our light spectrum, beyond our harmonics. For example, like this 'sixth sense': Longshot can 'read' objects and places. He can pick up an object, know the hands that shaped it, or the machine that stamped it out. He can feel the tears that fell on it or that it was passed as a gift. Or that it had killed. He can sit in a room and 'see' into its past, or feel the mood of the stranger who just left. He can sit in a valley and know its people.

Visual

As an alien, he has an exotic, more-than-human look. He has a star tattoo that appears around his eye when he clicks into a 'lucky streak'. He has leathery tough skin and a curving spine so that the spine-bones stick out, only four fingers....subtle alien differences. He will be essentially human looking so that he looks striking yet can still mix in without causing a stir. He will use strange words, have strange customs, etc. His costume would have the functional elements of a soldier, and probably be white. In daylight, his coloring is lighter, at night he can get darker like a shadow and reflect the colors around him. So his costume has a chamelion property.

LONGSHOT'S RACE

What follows is stuff writer/artist/editor need to know, but reader won't know for a long time.

Longshot comes from a three class society, several dimensions removed. There is an upper-crust class of decadent, nasty, amoral parasitic beings. They have evolved (or devolved) into a spineless race. They literally have no spines, their bodies long ago having needed supplementary supports, and now they have heavy-wire exo-skeletal suits to 'walk' in. (They find LS's raised-spine quite ugly.) They are a lazy, sluggy class, physically and morally crippled. There is a pagen-like demonic-looking middle class that have less brains but more strength (a sign of lower class) than the Upper Class. They do have spines. A few of these are the critters that chase LS to earth.

The third class is bred by the upper class. They are a slave class bred to fight the wars, farm, make shelters, do all the work for the planet. They are highly trained but 'harnessed'--super-beings that are stabled and controlled like throroughbreds. Genetically designed to look nothing like the ruling class (they even appear ugly to them), they ended up looking like man. (Some of LS's 'alien' elements are from the ruling class, the leathery skin, four fingers, etc.) They got this image of man from their myths, man having once crossed the dimensions in some time past. LS's

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

people are like that race's gargoyles or dragons. (this concept of mythical creatures as being imagery from other-dimensional visitations will be one theme of the book. For instance, Darkmane's 2 elemental friends--one type looks like a cherubic angel...the other a little devilish.)

Slaves are also mentally designed to not realize that they are physically superior to the ruling class, so there will be no revolts. They are genetically engineered for subserviance and compliance. When one reaches glimmers of a revolutionary consciousness, they are subject to brain-wipes. (THeir brains also have a built in pain-response trigger to control them...'thought' is painful.)

LS was about to lead a revolt when the ruling class wiped his mind (he has scars on his temples to prove it). With Luck, he escaped, before they managed to chuck him into a black hole. What the ruling class didn't know was that LS was not just your ordinary slave. He belonged to a secret sect--a 'constellation' of luck masters--called Lucky Stars.

They are an underground group that is highly trained and was lying in wait for the right time for a huge revolt. LS got unlucky and was detected. But as he was being chased towards a black hole he got lucky again and made it to earth. He pulled some middle class critters with him. They chase him thru the mini-series cause they think he can get them home. There are many rituals to get one

home. (they try a newborn baby, and in the end LS's luck finds a way to get them home but they leave LS behind, nyah-nyah.)

Now, I know this is all getting complex enough, but there's one more thing you have to know. These critters didn't just happen to be around when LS went thru the portal to earth. They were chasing him. Why did LS get so unlucky as to get himself in this predicament in the first place? Cause his luck turned on him, cause he got greedy. He was gambling with the critters' money to make them and him money. Thus, he was both abusing his power and dangerously exposing his underground sect's discipline to the eyes of the ruling class. That's how he got detected in the firstplace.

As for LS's memories, they were taken by the brain-wipe. There is a theory that when one dies, one leaves an ethereal 'psychic imprint' and that this is what 'ghosts' are. So even though LS's brain was wiped, he still has the residual 'ghosts' of memories. He will have flashbacks on bits of his history till he finally sees the whole picture. These flashbacks will be literally painful to see or hold on to. (remember the built in pain response for control.)

LONGSHOT #2

Longshot wants this stuff called MONEY.

His luck gets him a job as a high paid stunt man.

The sleazly director who hired him doesn't care for LS's safety and starts to use this reckless guy for more and more dangerous stunts at higher and higher stakes. He then makes a deal with LS--do anything I want for this movie and scrap the 'stunt-man-protection-guidlines', and I'll make you a million-dollar stunt man. Is that a lot of money? asks LS.

LS learns how to click into his luck, throwing himself into the danger, liking it. He gets carried away, and since his motive is impure (money) the lucky streak goes sour and horrific, the luck turns on him and he is smashed to bits. (Somewhere in there he will see his tattoo reflected and flash on his home)

Our mischevious demon critters will be lurking around adding to the chaos.

The director, afraid of being accused of murder, dumps LS in a river, leaving him for dead.

LONGSHOT #3

We set up a tragic character--an everyman/anyman regular joe. This guy hates each day each hour, and especially the inane rattle of his wife and his constant bill-collectors. He's on a slow treadmill to nowhere. His only friend is his TV, and even that puts him to sleep. He goes out to jump off a bridge, but doesn't fall far enough. He can't even kill himself right. But he does find something in the river--Longshot--still alive. LS is a self healer, and when he is better, the guy tells LS he can thank his 'lucky stars' he's still alive. LS looks up and wonders--Am I from the stars? I certainly seem to be a lucky star!

LS revels in life, this guy hides from it. LS attracts luck like a magnet, whereas the guy's followed by an unlucky cloud. We juxtapose this as LS takes it on himself in gratitude to show this guy life's worth living, it's great to be alive.

Since they both need money, they set off to get some. Guy says Con-Ed is a big villian,ripping off the people, we can take some of theirs. LS niavely believes him. So off they go, LS occasionally haveing to stop this poor guy from killing himself.

In their big adventure battle fighting advanced con-ed super-secret guard dog robots or something, with our lurking demons to add in a wild-card of chaos, the reader sees how LS is so special he just dwarfs this guy, makes him look even more like a smuck.

THE VILLAINS

Getting shot thru dimensions affects everyone differently. Our puppy-demon finds he not only has form, but he is a magic-magnet. While where he came from he was a nobody, here he could draw enough magic to be a god. He wants to stay and grow powerful enough to get revenge on LS. For now he just follows LS and watches him and pretends to be innocent. By issue four he is a huge mega-demon of many forms + faces. His shape is in constant flux + change (nails grow long, curl, drop off, etc for rest of form) On their world, he was the rebel-tracker who discovered LS and wiped his brain. He hates LS for being stuck in this world. (Remember--he's stuck on a planet made up of humans--the 'devils' of his mythology) Later, he reveals to LS that he knows who LS is. BUt he tells a deadly lie, tells LS a false origin to hurt him. In the final battle, LS must kill him, but if he does kill him he will also be killing all knowledge of his past and self.

The shadow- demons that chase LS are only half-here. They have to concentrate to hold form. They look out of sync, their speech often lapses into garbled sounds. They often move in slow motion or too fast. Just their hands and face may get into crystal clear focus while rest of body fades. (Parts they must use to touch things get more solid and visible.) They are stuck between worlds, neither-here-nor-there. NOt only do they hate LS for pulling them here, they hate the fact that only he made it all the way while they got stuck in-between. Their facial-features shift when they try to hold human form (asian to alien to indian etc.) Their true form shines thru sometimes. They use wrong styles, wrong words, smell funny, make people woosy and nauseous. Skin

goes from hot to cold. World around them seems slightly out of kilter. They make mistakes. For example, they stupidly name themselves from signs (Mr. Burger Woolworth or whatever.) THey say odd things like 'see you back when'. THey drape clothes over their forms to rob banks to get money, or possess people to do things for them, then dump person to wonder what happened.

Not everyone can even see these critters. One must be sensitive to such things. (Some things have to be believed to be seen).

[redacted]

Thru the mini-series LS will coninually be picking up clues, seeing flickers of things out of the corners of his eyes, things trailing him, as it all builds up till the whole picture is revealed. Please refer back to this discription of demons when drawing them thru series.

PORTALS

These high-energy inter-dimensional 'doors' have a distinct character. They are like 'dead' spots. Birds flying thru thump to the ground. Plants won't grow or grow funny. The colors of things are slightly off. Mechanical or electrical gadgets work or work too much--cameras that won't stop clicking, etc. There is a hydrogen sulfide(?) smell. Things fall apart. Clothes tend to unravel, sounds echo or fall flat. Very entropic place. Remember this in plot, as they approach demon-ritual. Hint at wierdness at first, then it gets worse right at the sight of the ritual. As they get near site, they will feel sick from the palpable strangness and notice subtle clues.

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Guy sees this too--whatever it is LS's got, he knows he ain't got it. All men weren't created equal--sad but true. But in all the danger and excietment he starts missing the normalcy of his tired safe little life and when the adventure is over, he goes home, even bearing flowers to try again with his wife. Meanwhile, in the Con-ed battle, LS's shut down a city-wide energy grid, sees the error of stealing, and we leave him wondering how to give the money back. In this story we see how in his well-meaning impulsiveness, LS only manages to royally screw-up.

LONGSHOT #4

Longshot as a modern-day Robin Hood, trying to return the money to the 'people', with a string of super heros--Moon Knight, Black Widow, Cap America and finally Doctor Strange--coming after him. We switch the perspective here. We see from LS's (the 'villian's') viewpoint. Super heroes are seen as pain-in-the-butt bothersome creatures who mess up your plans.

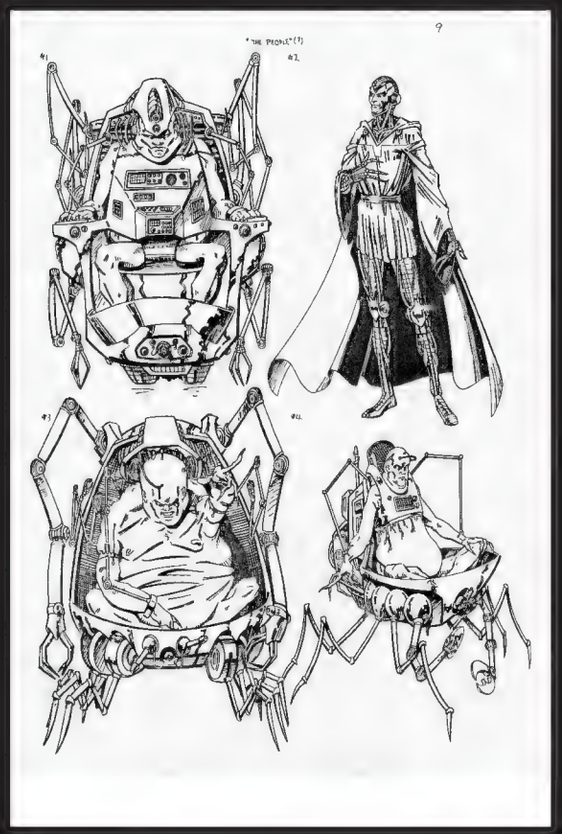
In sub-plot, LS makes friends with some little kids he gives money to. They are busy playing war. ("My favorite show is MAGNUM!") etc.

LS has a brief flashback on his days as a warrior, knows what the kids are emulating is bad, tries to teach them so. They talk of the 'enemy' they must kill. LS thinks they've gone too far into the fantasy, and he goes on this 'ememy-hunt' with them to see that they don't hurt themselves. In end, we find there really is a monster, the same one Darkmane meets in her issue #4, and off we go on the regular comic.

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Arthur Adams' designs for "people and demons" populating the world of *Longshot* included early versions of Mojo (#1, #2 and #4) and Major Domo (#2).

His "demons" inspired Ann Nocenti to create entirely new characters based off them. "Demon #6" became Longshot's ally Quark. "Demon #7" spurred the creation of Mojo's enforcer and longtime X-Men villain Spiral. "Demon #18" became the hunter Magog.



Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

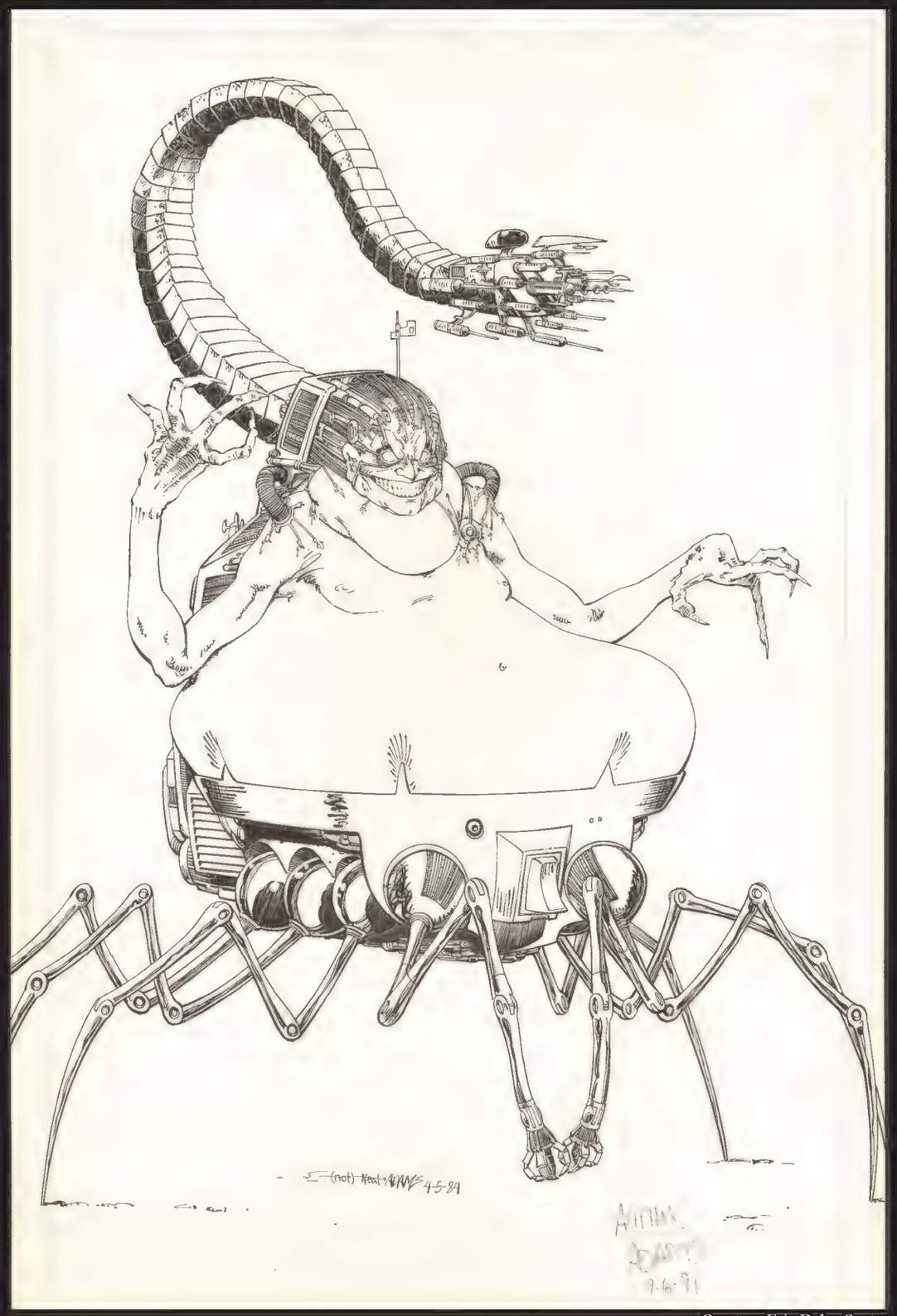
Magog character design
by Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Designs for the people of the Mojoverse
by Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Mojo character design
by Arthur Adams



Courtesy Eric Delos Santos

Major Domo character design
by Arthur Adams

Courtesy Eric Delos Santos

Longshot character design
by Arthur Adams

HAIR; STRAWBERRY BLONDE
EYES; LITE GREEN
EYEGLOW SHOULD PROBABLY BE WHITE BUT YELLOW ON EDGES
BLADES GO IN LITTLE HOLSTERS
Colors;
Costume SHOULD EITHER BE LEFT LINEITE (OPEN AREAS UNCOLORED), or Lite Blue (Like Storms NEW Costume.) Cuffs are gold ochre, as is KNIFE Sheath and Knife belt. STAR on chest is supposed to be silver.
ADAMS 6-83
"LONGSHOT" #1

Courtesy Arthur Adams

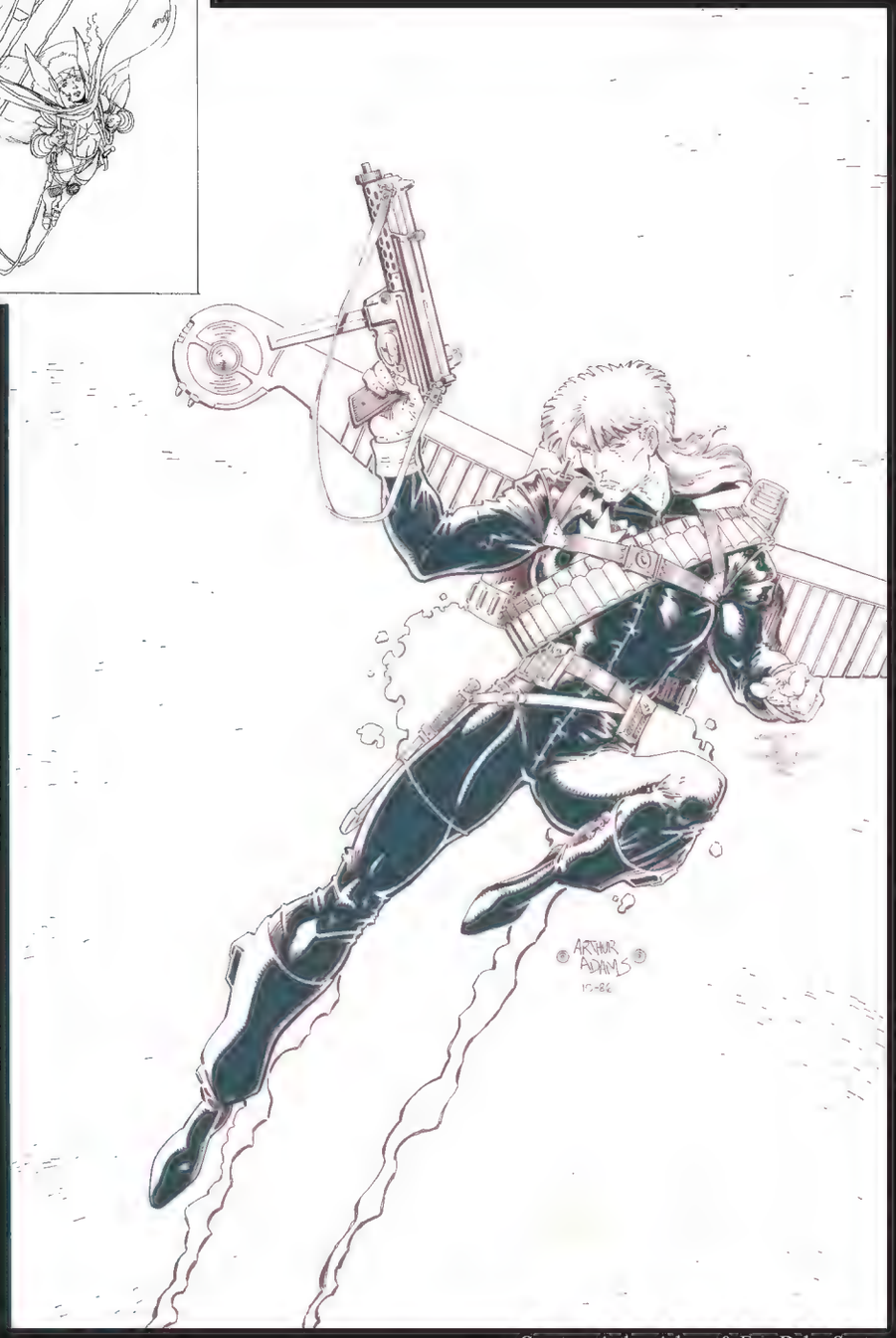
Ricochet Rita character design, inspired by *Longshot* writer Ann Nocenti
by Arthur Adams

Longshot
Hair; Brown or Black
Eyes; lite green
Shirt; White with violet strips
Belt + Boots; Brown
Jacket; Light Blue
Pants; Light Blue (but darker than jacket (like Dr. Strange's shirt.)
Should looked Faded
ADAMS 11-83

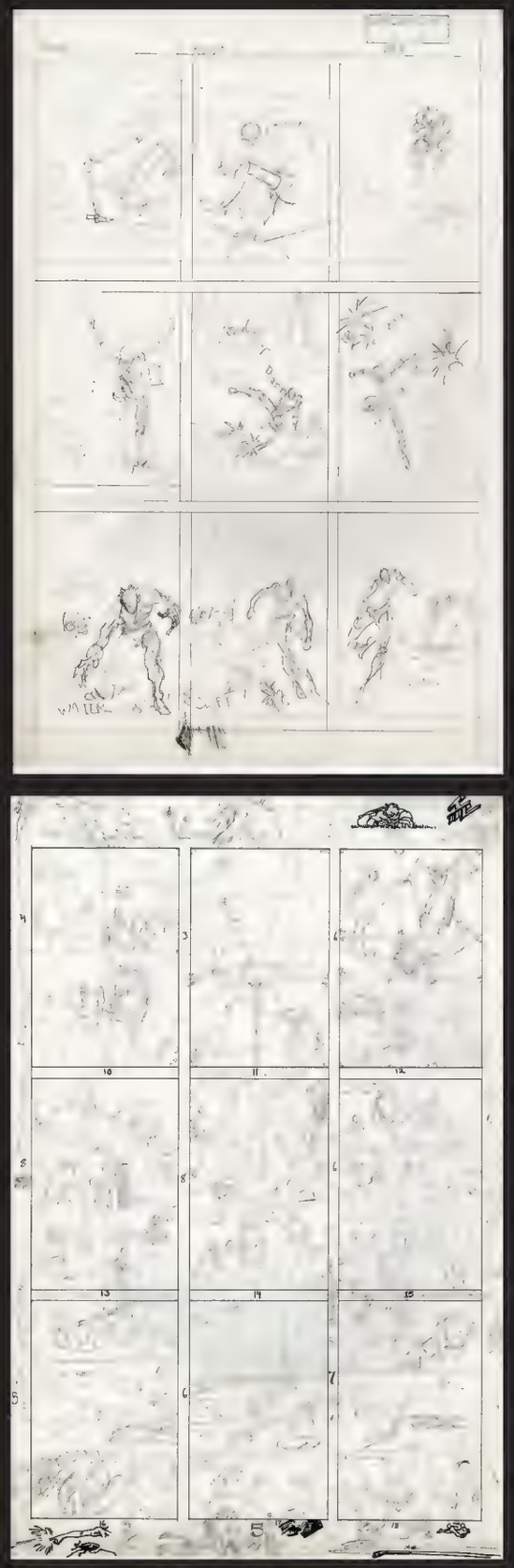
Courtesy Arthur Adams

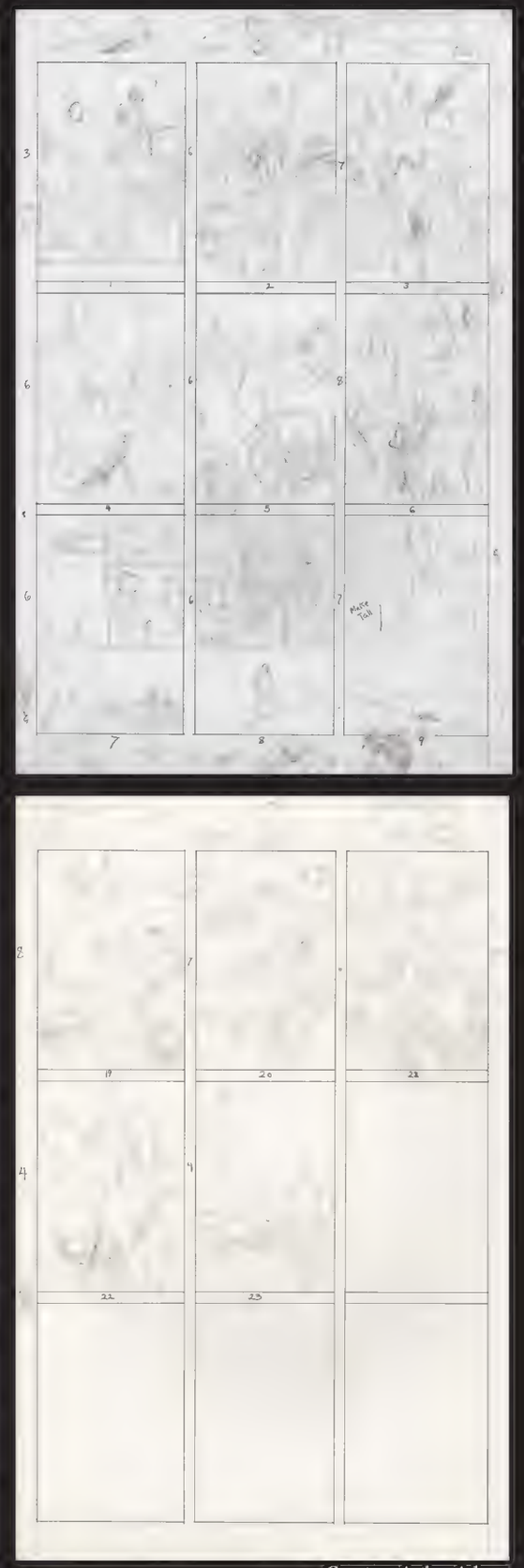
Top: *Longshot* #2 cover sketch
Bottom: 1986 Longshot pinup

Facing page: *Longshot* #1, page 1 (top left) and Longshot #3 thumbnail sketches



Courtesy Arthur Adams & Eric Delos Santos

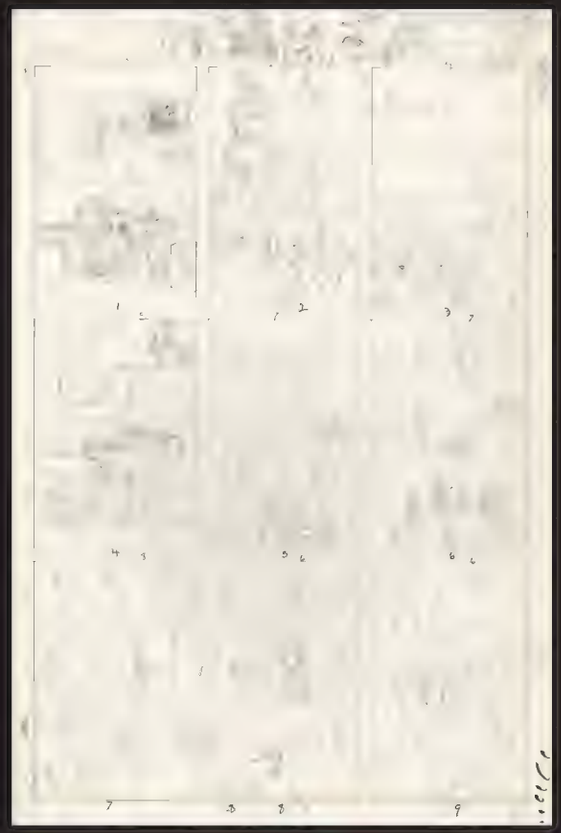




Courtesy Arthur Adams

As part of his process of breaking down each issue of *Longshot* visually, Arthur Adams first drew small 1.5" x 2.25" thumbnail sketches. These thumbnails would then be refined into tighter layout sketches at 4" x 6" before going to final pencil art on 11 x 17" art board.

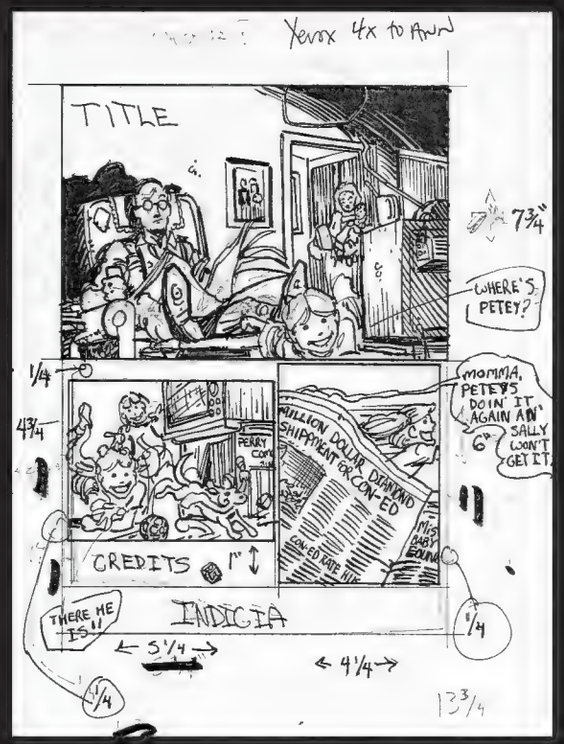
This page: *Longshot* #4 thumbnails
Facing page: *Longshot* #5 thumbnails

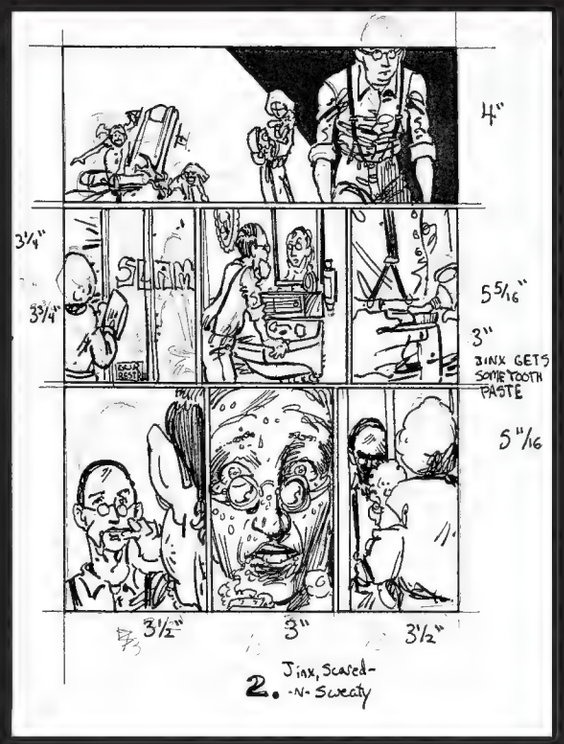


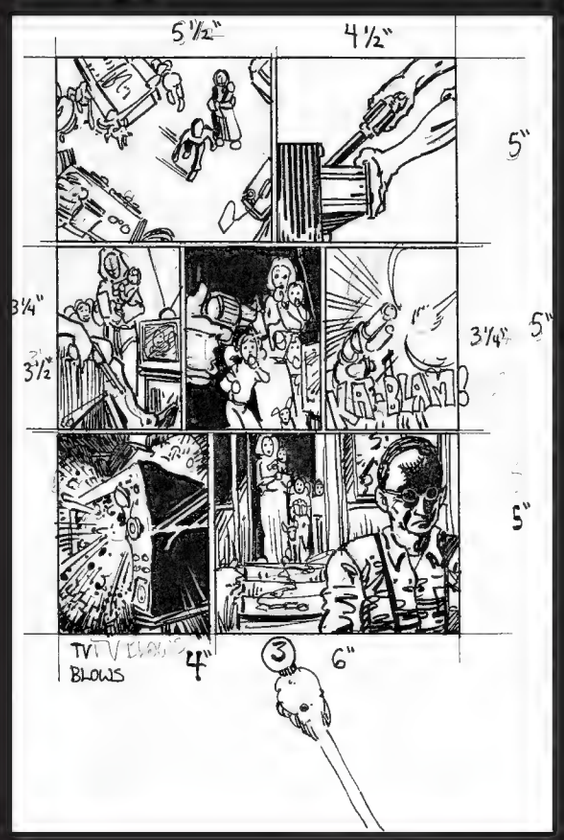
Courtesy Arthur Adams

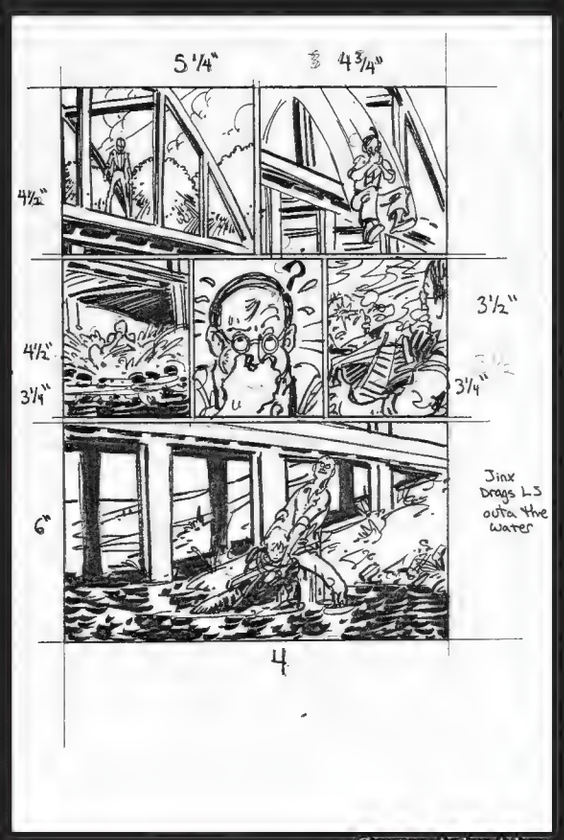
Courtesy Arthur Adams

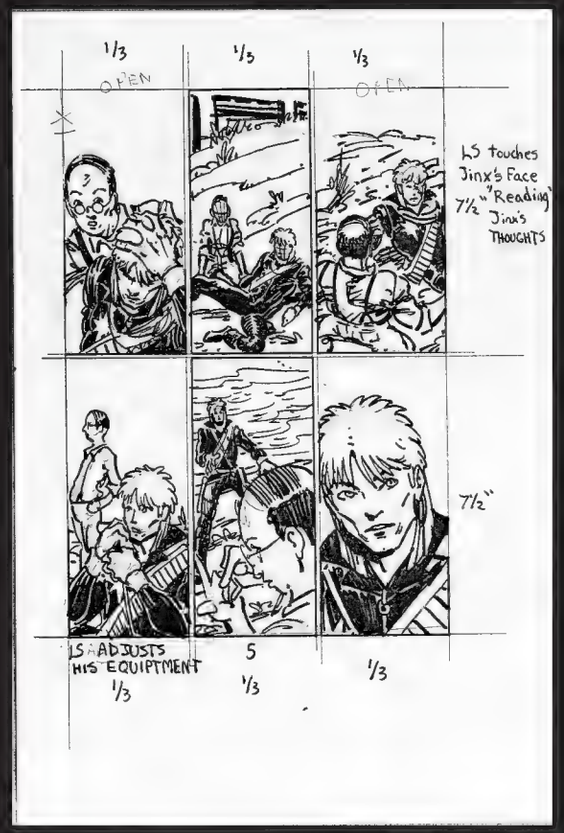
Longshot #3, layout sketches
by Arthur Adams

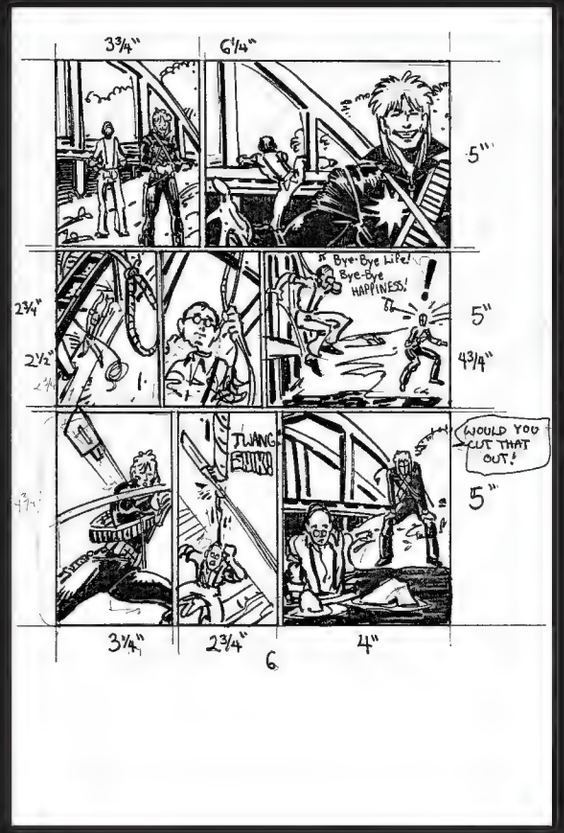


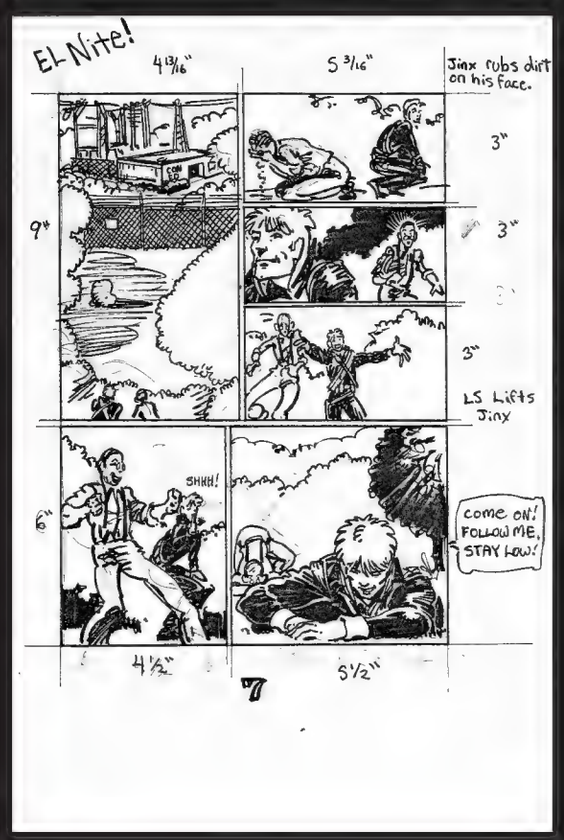








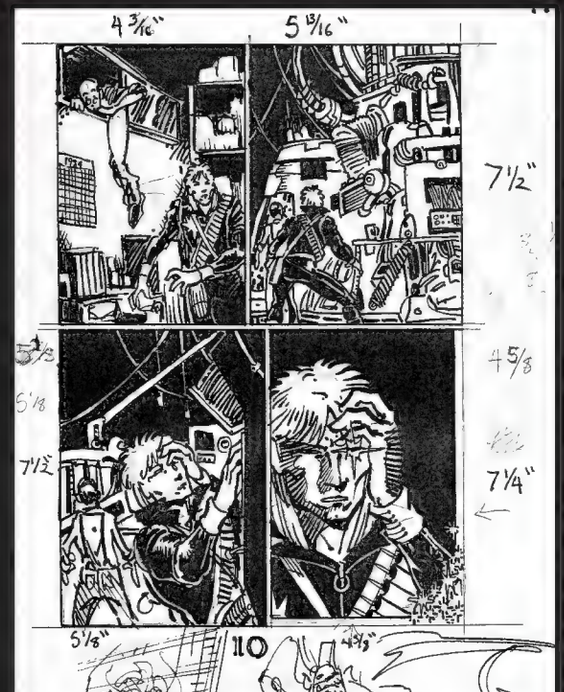




Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

9



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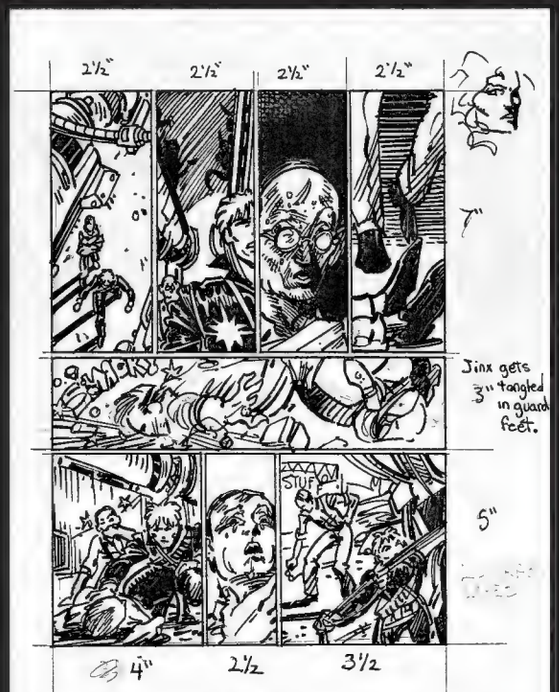

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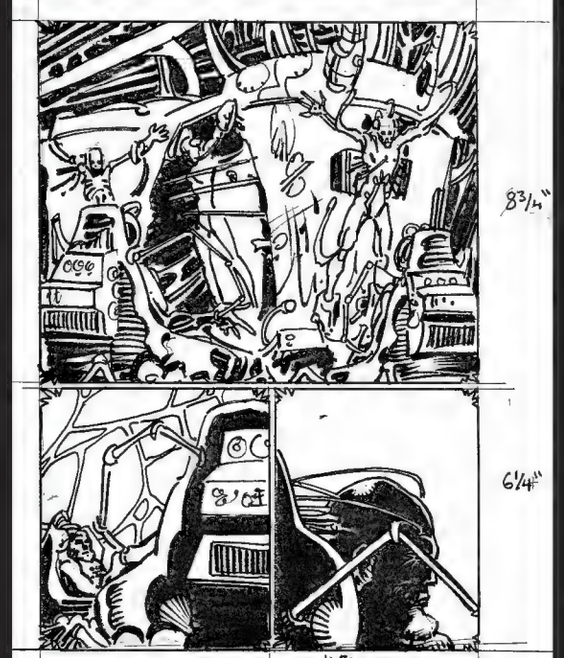

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12.

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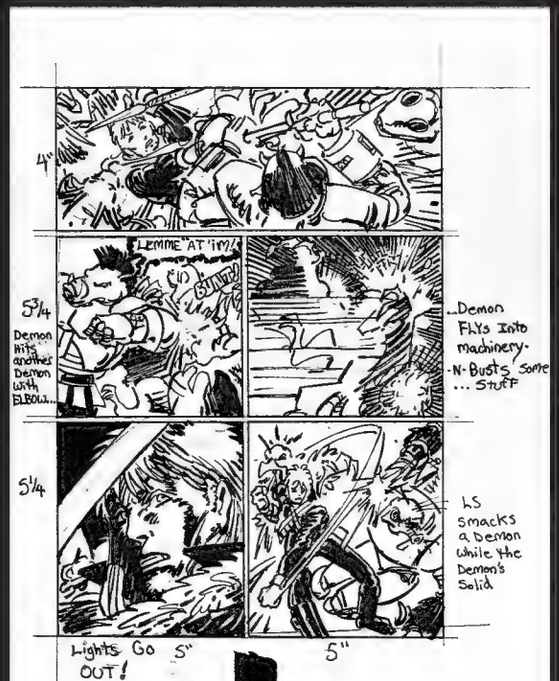
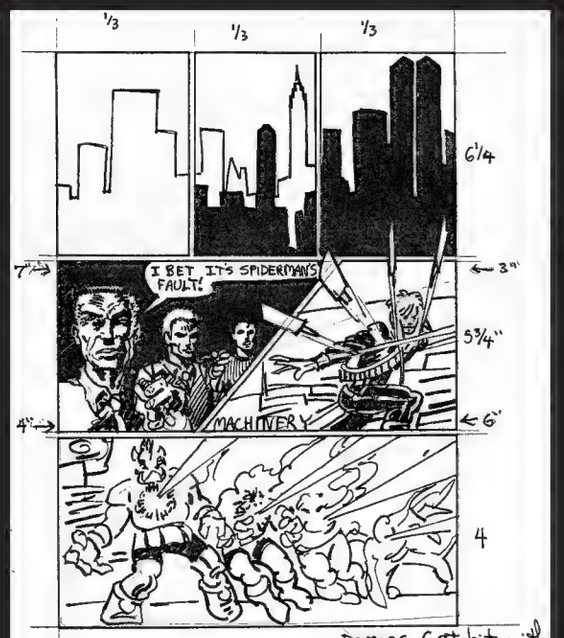
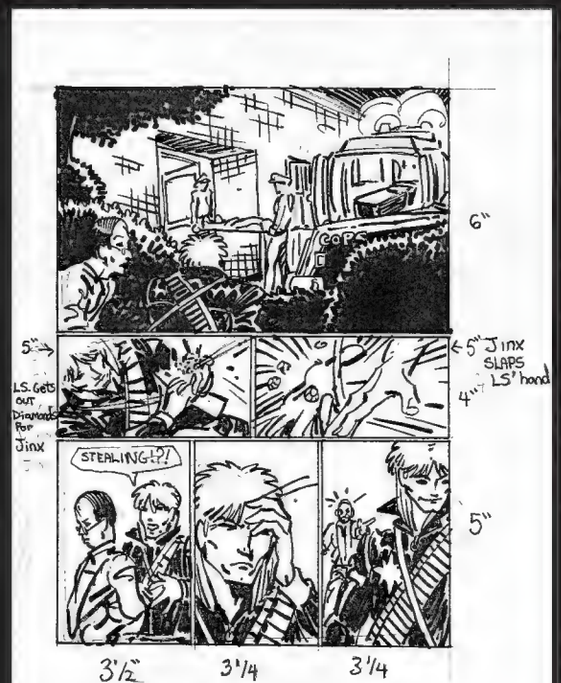


16.

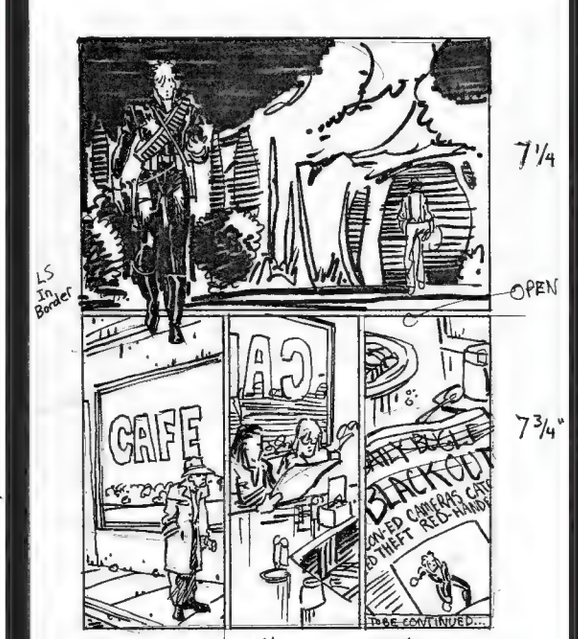
Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams





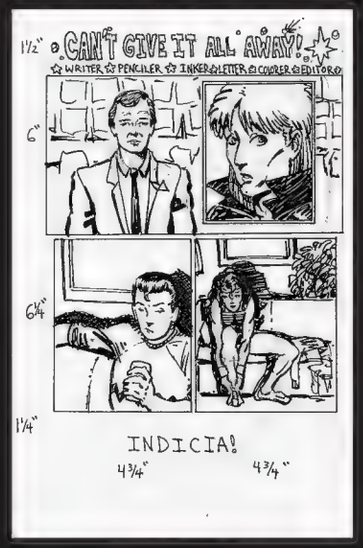
Note the two different approaches considered for issue #3, page 19 ...OR...



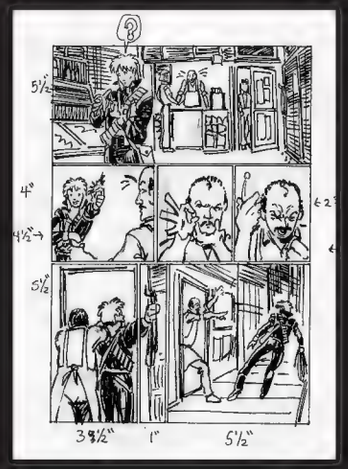
Courtesy Arthur Adams

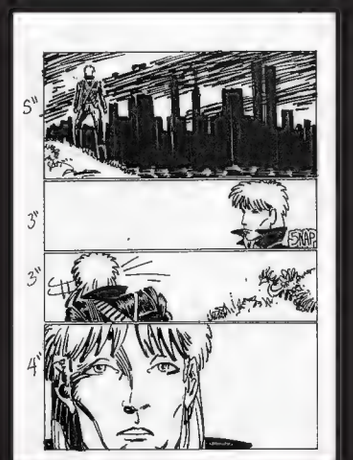
Courtesy Arthur Adams

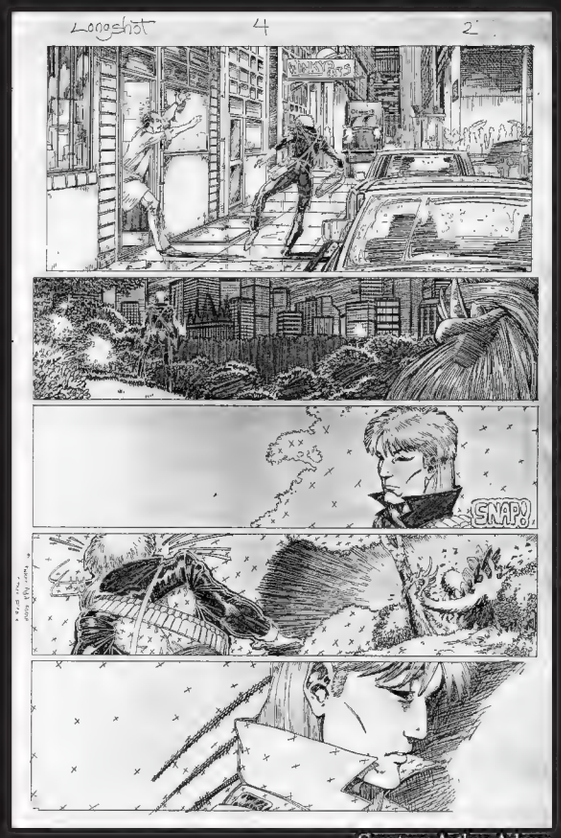
Longshot #4, layout sketches (left) and pencil art (right), by Arthur Adams

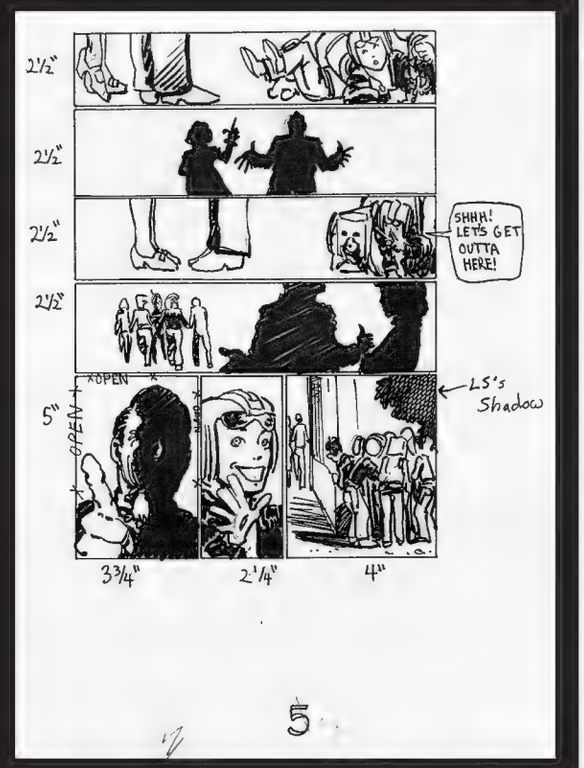


Layout pages 2-3 were condensed into a single page when penciled.





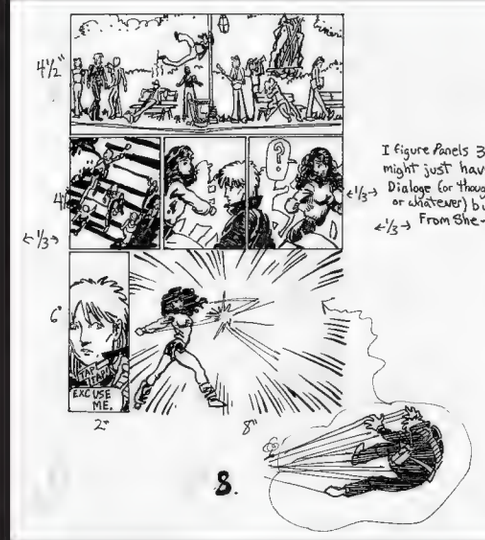




Courtesy Arthur Adams

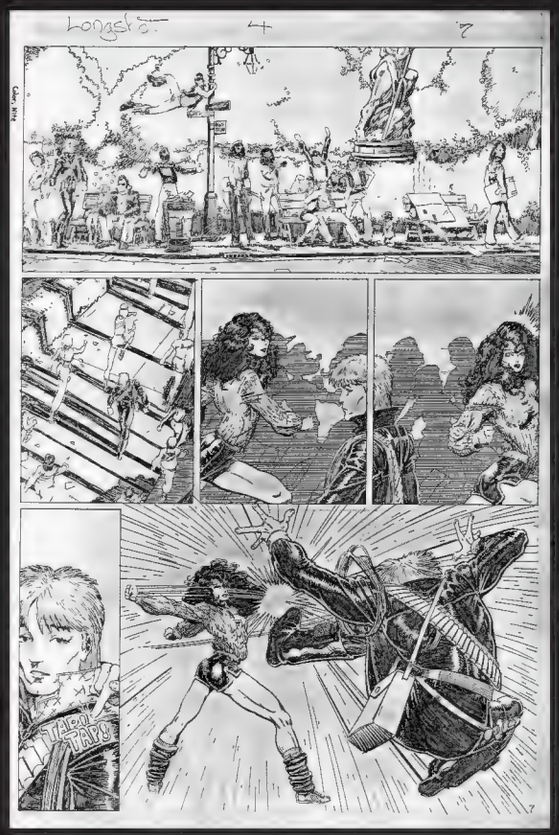
Courtesy Arthur Adams

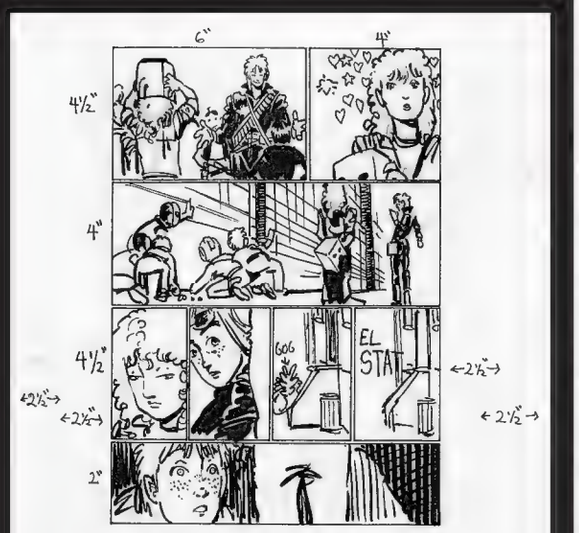
6



I figure Panels 3 n' 4 might just have LS Dialogue (or thought balloons or whatever) but none From She-Hulk.

8.





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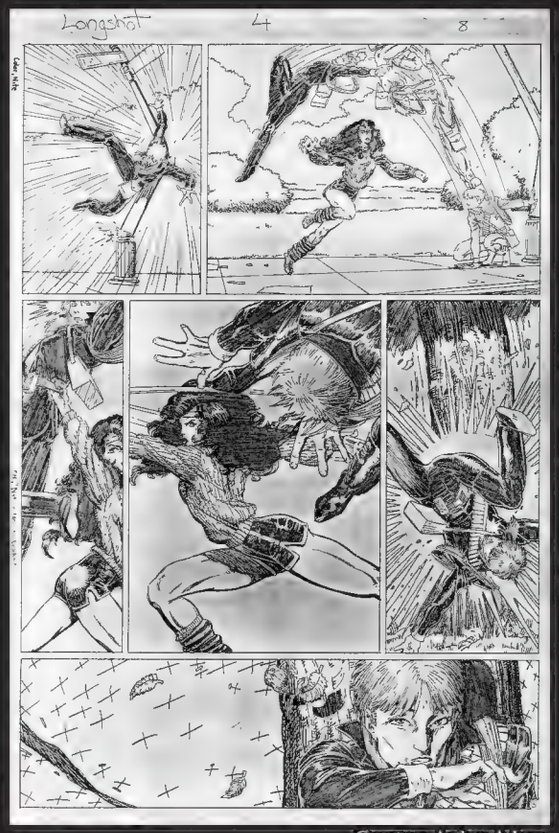


Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

4" 2 3/4" 3 1/4"
5"
4"
← 5 1/2" →
← 4 1/2" →
6"
2" 2 1/4" 3" 1 1/2" 1 1/4"

10

LONGSHOT 4

I AM TO, A FUN GUY!

Courtesy Arthur Adams

5"
2"
2"
2"
4"
DEMON TALKS ABOUT JINX, RITA, Elliot, the baby + Heaster
TAKE OFF THOSE MASKS!!!
2 1/2" 2 1/2" 2 1/2" 2 1/2"
Mojo ZAPS Demon

12

LONGSHOT 4

5 1/4" 1/4" 4 1/2"
3 1/2"
3 1/2"
3 3/4"
4 1/4"
7"
SSSHAKING
Some Mirrors Shatter
6" 4"

11

I think the masks + that Mojo + Hee Ott bananas

LONGSHOT 4 10

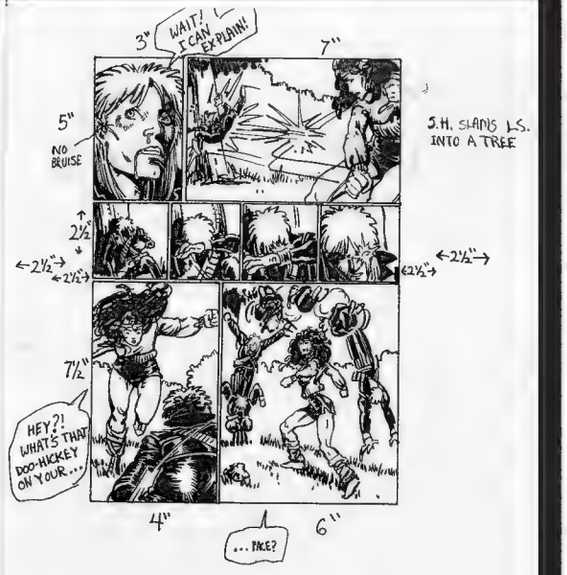
SSSSHAKING!

5 3/4" 4 1/4"
7"
8"
4" 3" 3"
THIS PANEL WILL BE DIFFERENT

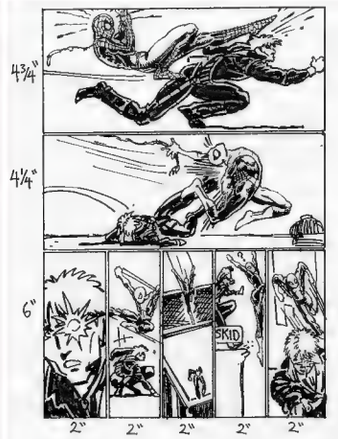
13

LONGSHOT 4 2

Courtesy Arthur Adams



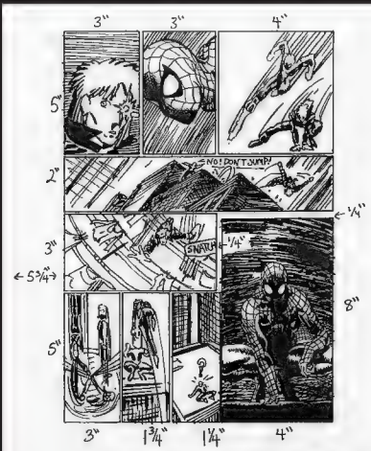
14



SPIDEY(?) OVER SHOOTS LONGEY(???)

16

15



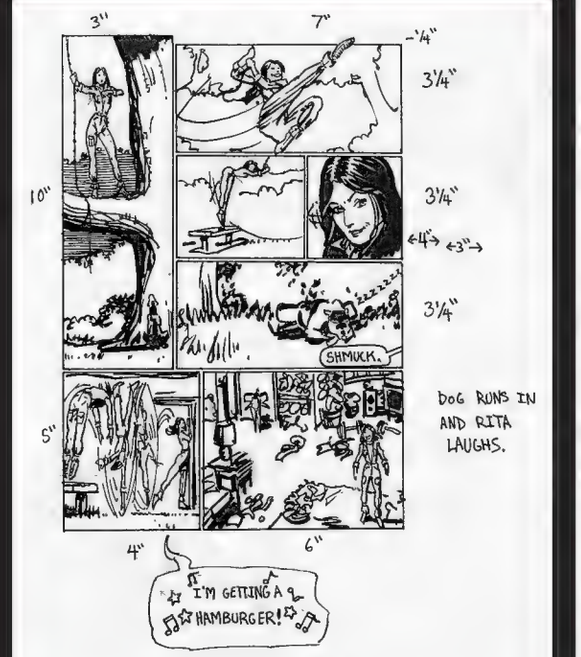
WHERE'D HE GO?

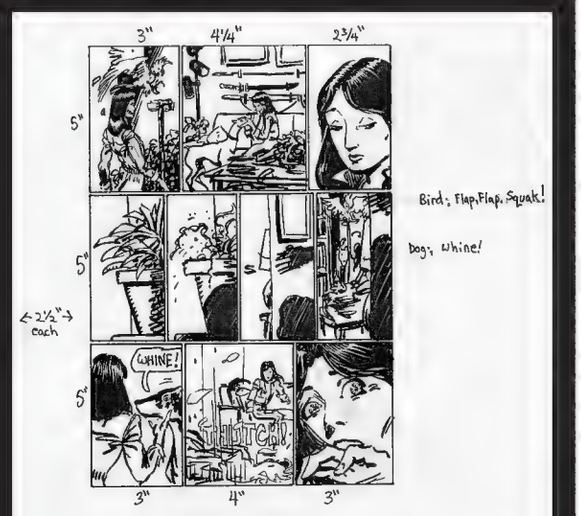
Panels 5 thru 8; As LS Falls He grabs a piece of laundry hanging on laundry lines between two buildings. Then he grabs a line and spins around, gaining momentum to rocket his lighter the human body back towards Spider-man. As Longshot shoots over S-M he wraps his bit of laundry around S-M's head. By the time S-M untangles himself, LS is long gone.

17

I know this looks awful small, but I think on the comic page, on mando paper, it'll be A.O.K. Cut

Courtesy Arthur Adams

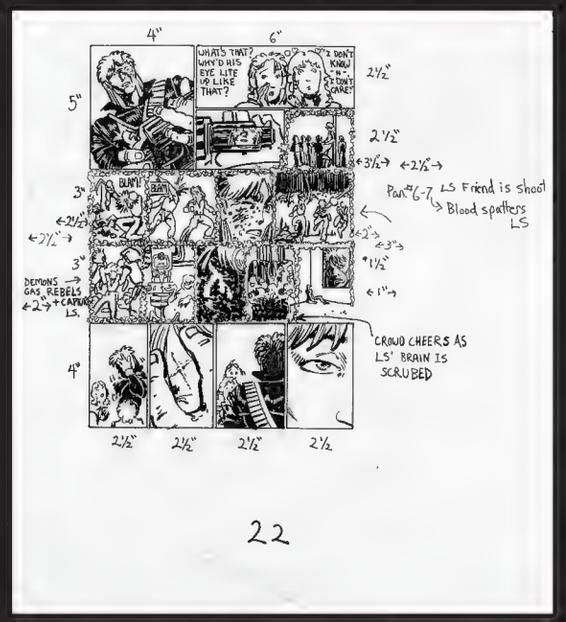


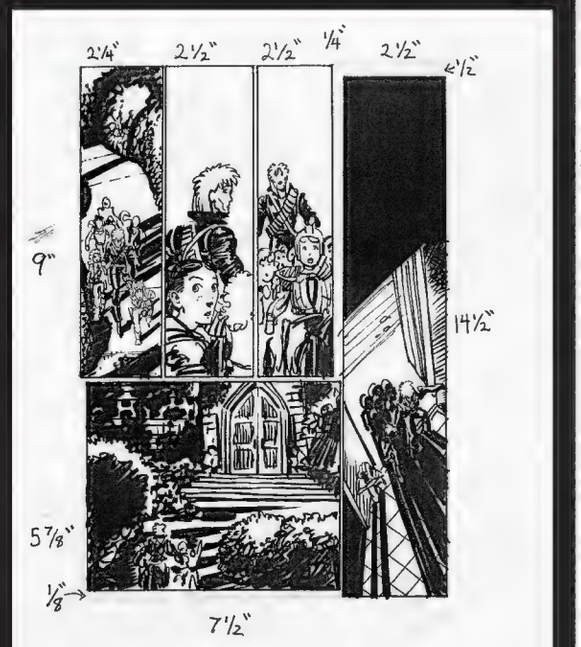


Courtesy Arthur Adams

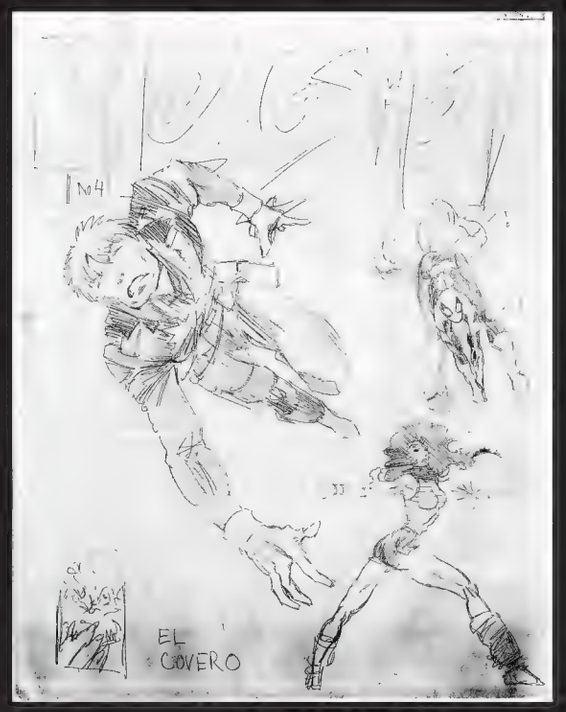
Courtesy Arthur Adams

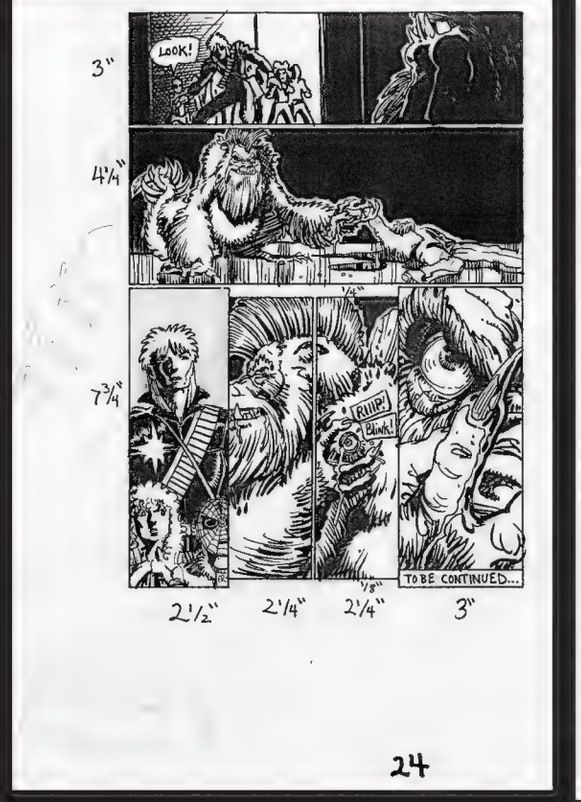
Arthur's original layout for issue #4, page 22 (top left) was expanded to two pages (top and bottom right) at the penciling stage; a 25th page was added to the issue after the initial layouts.





Bottom left: *Longshot* #4, cover thumbnail sketch

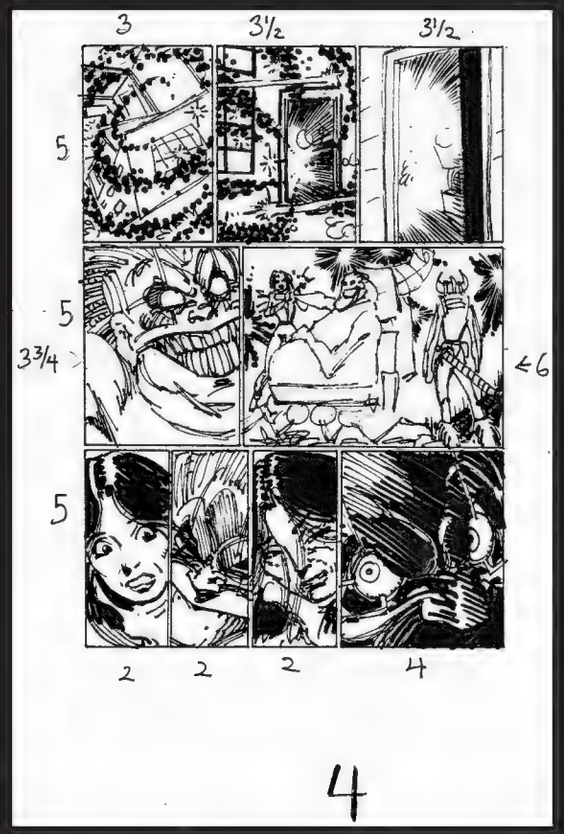


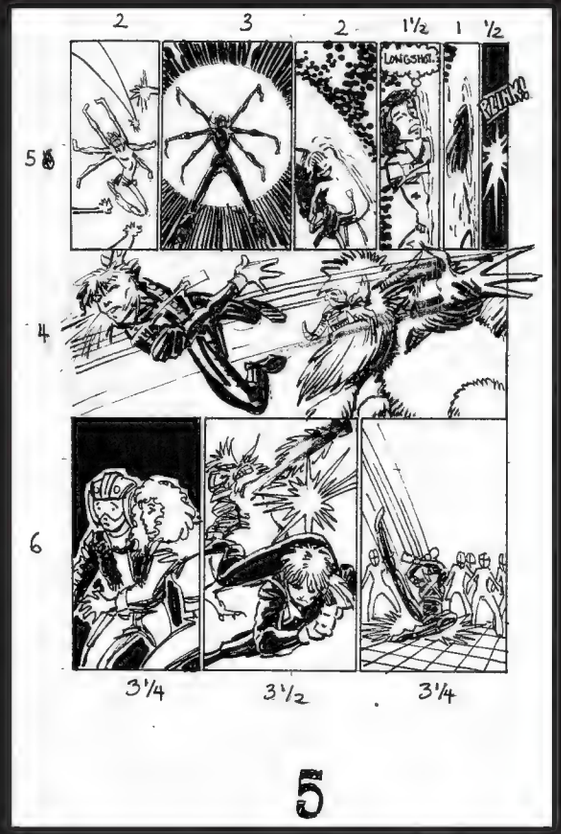


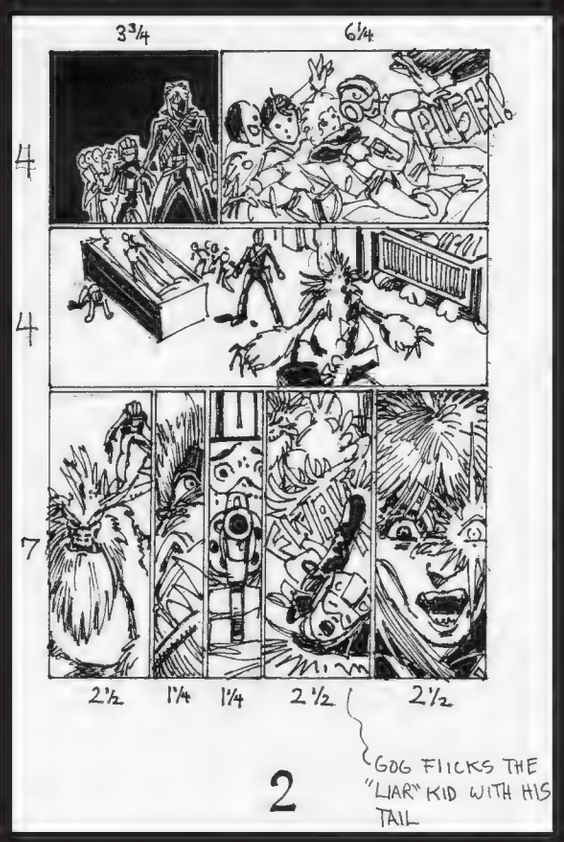
Courtesy Arthur Adams

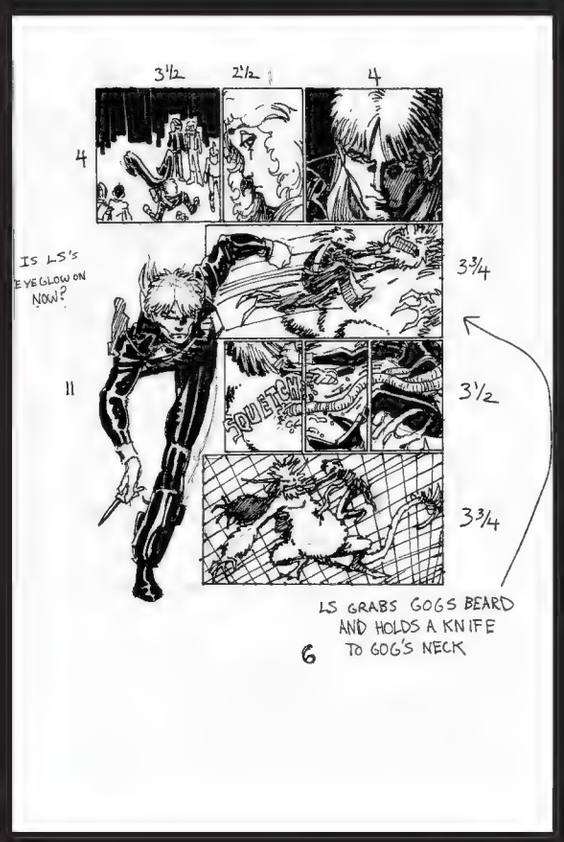
Courtesy Arthur Adams

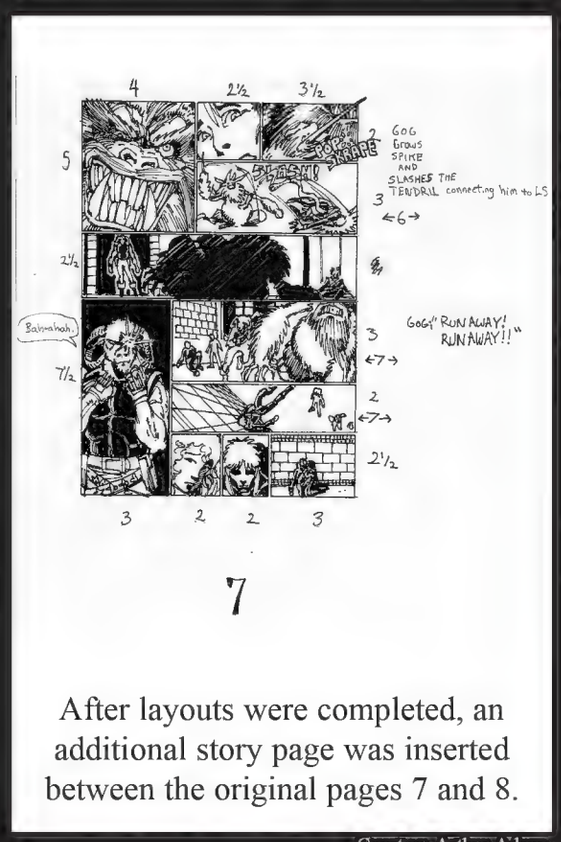
Longshot #5, cover sketch and interior layout sketches, by Arthur Adams







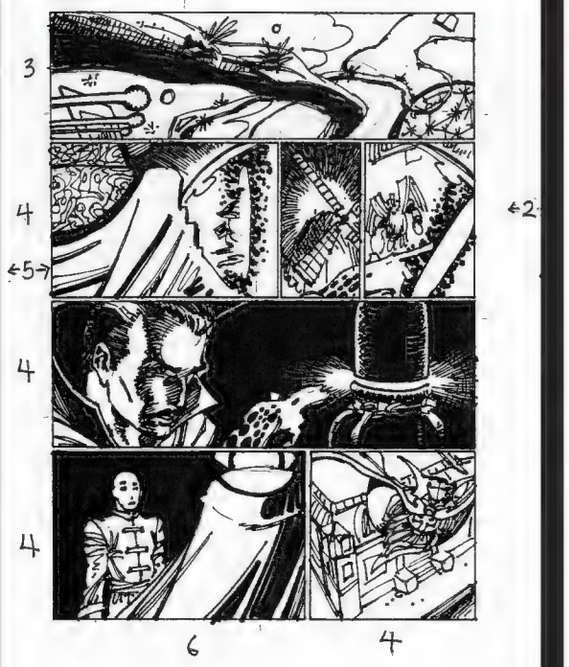




After layouts were completed, an additional story page was inserted between the original pages 7 and 8.

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams



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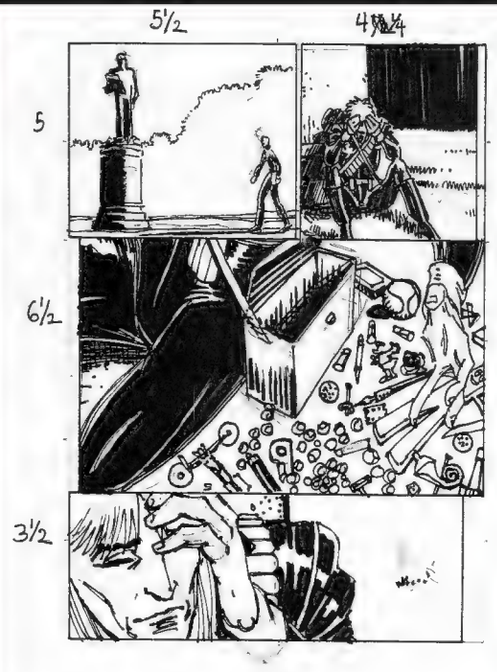
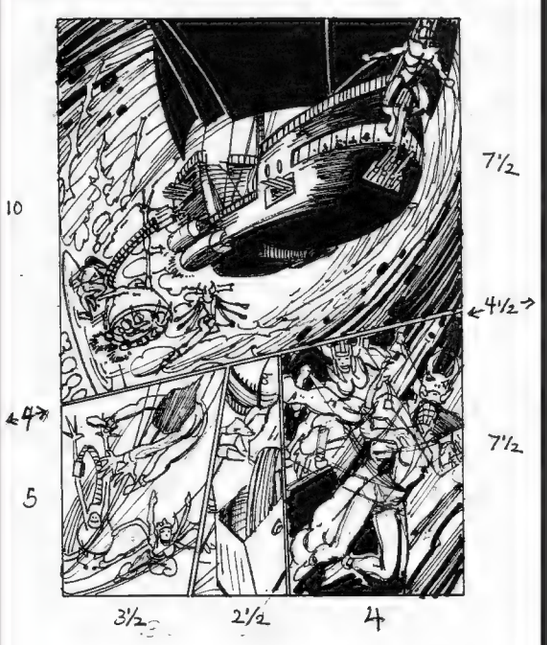


9

Some Real EPIC type stuff on this page! It runs non-stop for several days and nights without taking a knap even!

12

13



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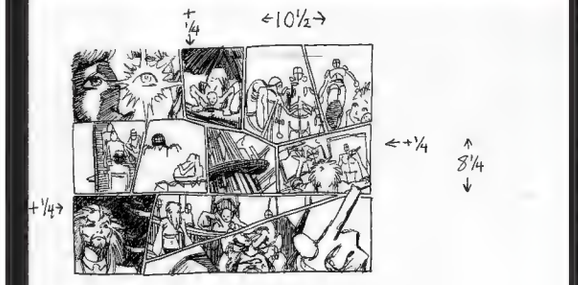


pan* 1. Spineless Race starting ing trees
2. Arize working on 1st Frame
3. " trying out 1st Fromne to spineless people
4. conveyor belt of Frames for mass production
5. Arizes spider-like-toy to spider-like chairs for really lazy spineless people
6. Arize creates Floating cities.

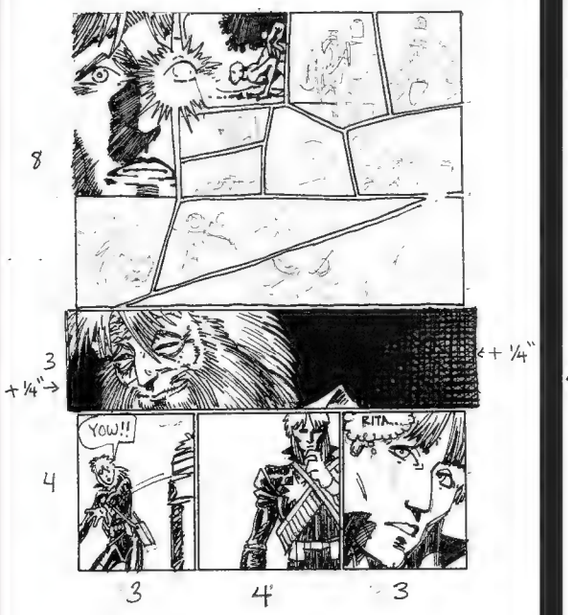
15

7. Arize designing slave class
8. " getting fed up
9. Arize before spineless COURT
10. Spineless Judge tells Arize to hit the road

Layout notes for montage panels on published issue #5, page 16

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams



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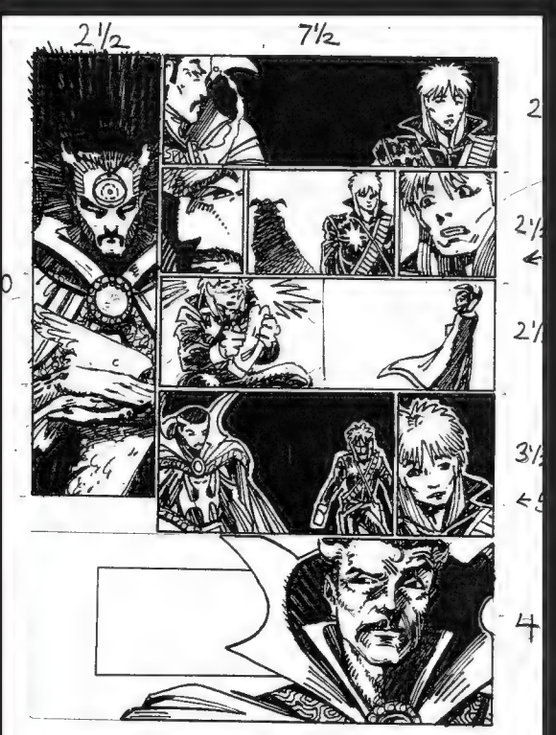
16

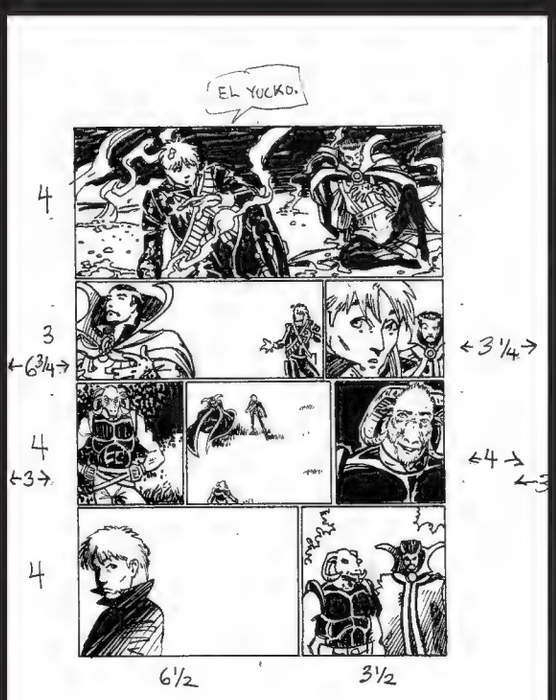
20

21

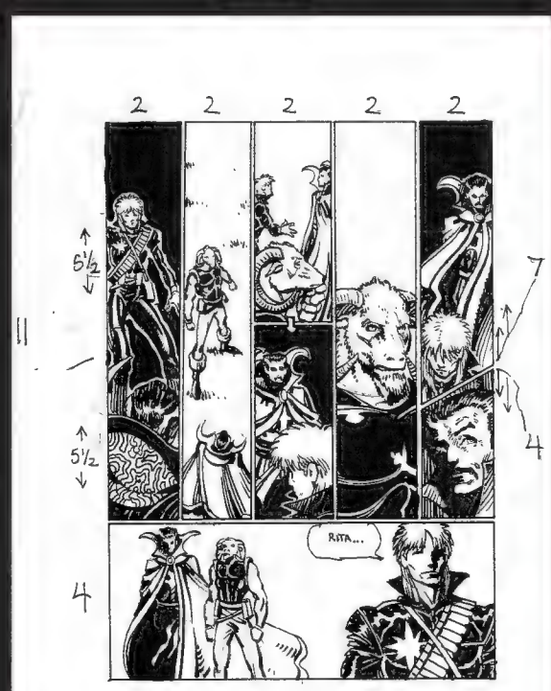


17

18



22

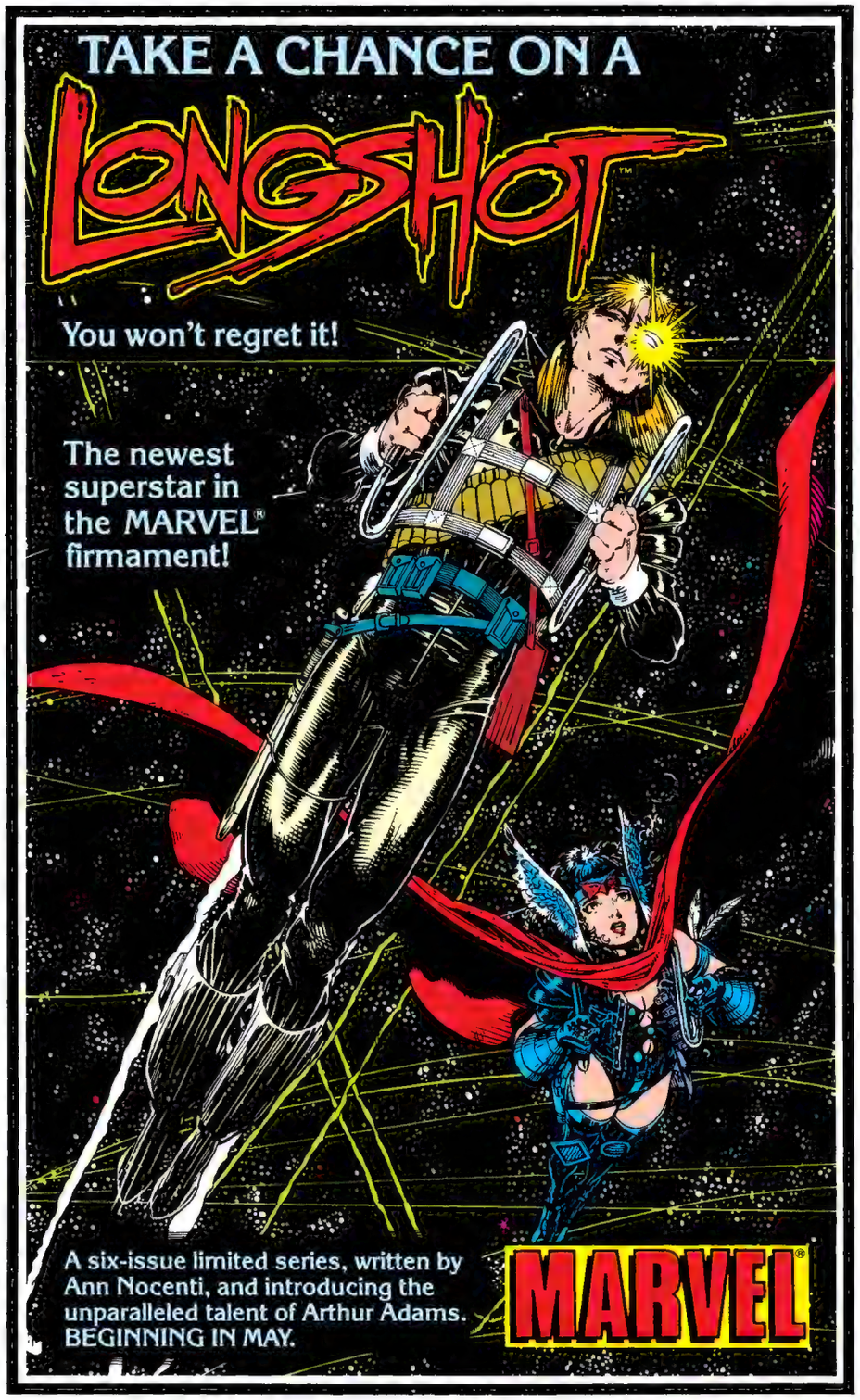


23

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Courtesy Arthur Adams

Longshot house ad
from September 1985 titles


TAKE A CHANCE ON A
LONGSHOT™
You won't regret it!
The newest superstar in the MARVEL® firmament!
A six-issue limited series, written by Ann Nocenti, and introducing the unparalleled talent of Arthur Adams. BEGINNING IN MAY.
MARVEL®

Longshot #1, page 1 original art
by Arthur Adams & Bill Anderson

LONG SHOT
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
A MAN WITHOUT A PAST
THESE TROOPS WANT ME BAD! I WISH I KNEW WHY! HOLY TERROR... WHY ME?!
EASE DOWN!
MY RECKLESS HEARTS ARE TRYING TO SMASH OUT OF MY CHEST!
IT SMELLS... WRONG. COLORS ARE RIOTING! AND VOICES... ECHO!
ALL THEIR SHOTS ARE MISSING ME. BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
EITHER I'M ALREADY DEAD... OR I'VE SUDDENLY BECOME WILDLY LUCKY!
CO-CREATORS
ANN NOCENTI WRITER
ARTHUR ADAMS PENCILS
ANDERSON & PORTACIO INKS
JOE ROSEN LETTERS
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORS
LOUISE JONES EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF
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ARTHUR ADAMS

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Longshot #3, page 10 original art
by Arthur Adams & Whilce Portacio

LONG 3 14 14
LOOKS LIKE A CLUBHOUSE DOWN HERE.
MUST BE THE SCIENTISTS' OFFICE.
WOW! THAT'S THE EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT FROM THE NEWS PHOTOS!
THE DIAMONDS SHOULD BE RIGHT HERE!
I'LL SEE IF I CAN FIND 'EM!
LOOKIT THIS GRID...ALL THIS METAL...SO MANY WIRES...FAMILIAR...
SO COMPELLING... WIRES... PULLS ME BACK ...I REMEMBER...GRIDS...
10

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Longshot #4, page 19 original art
by Arthur Adams & Whilce Portacio

LS4 26. 26
HELLO, DEAR. MY, YOUR PLANTS DON'T SEEM TOO HAPPY TO SEE ME. HOW ABOUT YOU, HMMMMM?
SPIRAL, YOU WERE RIGHT!
SHE DOES HAVE THE SAME FORM AS OUR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED SLAVE RACE!
RRRRRRRR
AND YOU SAY THERE'S A WHOLE PLANET OF THESE REPULSIVE THINGS?
THEY STAND UPRIGHT, WITH BACKBONES...UGH! PERHAPS I SHOULD JUST EXTERMINATE THE WHOLE RACE.
I DO SO HATE TO BE MESSY, THOUGH.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MY DEAR, DON'T YOU LIKE MY FACE? MY, YOU'RE A DUMB ONE, AREN'T YOU?
I SEE NOW THAT LONGSHOT, THAT REBEL SLAVE, MUST BE FOUND BEFORE HE RETURNS HOME TO TELL ALL THE SLAVES ABOUT THIS RACE.
WHY, THEY'D ALL PROBABLY FEEL LIKE THEY WERE REAL...AND RISE UP AND REBEL...IT WOULD BE...INCONVENIENT.
PITY, SPIRAL, THAT YOU RECEIVED SIX ARMS. MAKES YOU STILL NOT QUITE RIGHT. STILL A FREAK, EH?
HMMM...RICOCHET RITA IS YOUR LABEL? PREPARE TO TAKE US TO LONGSHOT!
19
ARTHUR ADAMS 31487

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Longshot #4, page 24 original art
by Arthur Adams & Whilce Portacio

4
31.
ANYBODY HOME...?
URP...OH...SO STUFFED FULL OF MAGIC...MUST WAIT FOR LONGSHOT'S LUCK TO BRING HIM TO ME.
HIS LUCK THAT ISN'T REALLY LUCK...
...WILL DELIVER HIM TO ME...
...HIS EQUAL...HIS OPPOSITE...
EH? HE'S HERE!
IT'S YOU! PUP! I CAN SEE AND SMELL YOU, YOU CAN'T BE JUST IMAGINED...
GOG N'MAGOG, TO YOU.
YOU'VE... GROWN... MUTATED... I GUESS DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE REAL?
HEH...HEH...YES, DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE REAL. BUT THE LONGER I STAY ON THIS STUPID PLANET THE MORE MAGIC I DRAW INTO ME. I'M A MAGIC-MAGNET HERE. HEH HEH.
AND NOW I'M FULL, BLOATED WITH POWER!
KRAK!
HEY, ANYBODY GOT AN ITCH THEY NEED SCRATCHED?
L-LONGSHOT! IT--IT'S TOO HORRIBLE! SOMETHIN' THAT AWFUL... IT CAN'T EXIST ON EARTH!
I-IT AIN'T REAL! IT CAN'T BE!
NO?
OH, 'SCUSE ME, I FEEL AN EYE POPPING--COULD USE A COUPLE MORE WITH YOU AROUND.
POP
24

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Longshot #5, page 17 original art
by Arthur Adams & Whilce Portacio

LS 5 24
24
MUCH LATER...AS THE SUN SETS...
KRASH!
HOLY...! THE OUTSIDE WAS RUINED--AND IN HERE IT'S EVEN WORSE! I THOUGHT I SAW A STRANGE SHAPE IN HERE...
THE DOOR WAS OPEN, SON.
THESE POOR BEASTS. NO EVIDENCE OF ANY VIOLENCE DONE TO THEM, YET THEIR LIFEFORCE HAS BEEN DRAWN OUT OF THEIR CORPOREAL FORMS.
ALL LIVING THINGS, THE PLANTS...THE GRASS AND TREES OUTSIDE...HAVE BEEN DRAINED OF ENERGY.
AND RITA?
RITA? A GIRL? NO GIRL HERE. JUDGING FROM ALL THE BARBELLS, FOOTBALLS AND SPEARS LYING AROUND HERE I TOOK THIS TO BE THE HOME OF A MAN.
YEAH, RITA.
HEY! SHUT OFF THE LIGHT!
17

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Arthur Adams first painted the *Longshot* #6 cover before deciding to go with a pencil and ink illustration for the final artwork.

INTRODUCTION

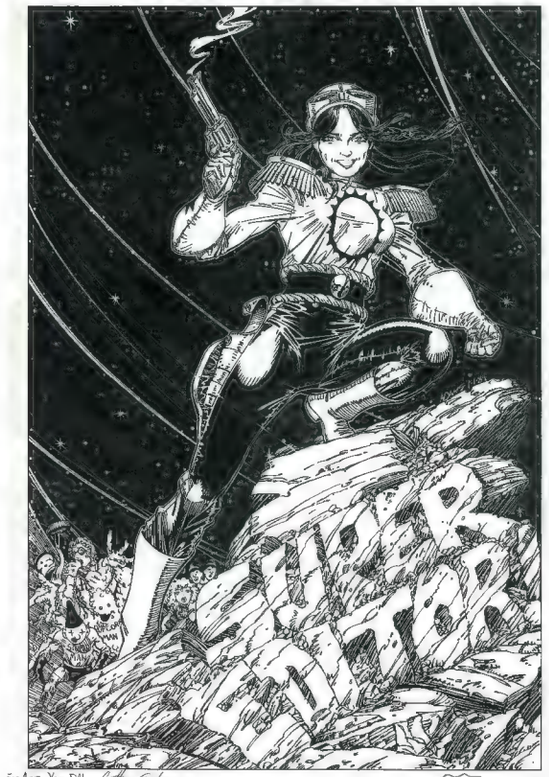
BY ANN NOCENTI

FROM LONGSHOT TPB (1989)

Pick up a newspaper, turn on the television, take a walk down a city street—then *try* to have a good day. The world can be relentlessly tragic and gloomy. Ridiculous religious and political wars, incomprehensible barbaric crimes, the impossibility of finding truth in the rewritten fiction called history in the slick images of print and television—warping, distorting life almost as instantly as it unfolds. It is quite daunting, this world we exist in.

But then…there are those other moments—when the light hits just right, a breeze lifts a curtain, a cat stretches, a child laughs, the wind carries a tune from a faraway saxophone… It's those lovely, crystal moments that hold the whole darn grim world afloat, moments so buoyant not even TV can drag you down.

That's how I first saw Longshot. He's the unexpected laughter, the unbidden kindness, the fresh insight, the song that lightens your step, the smile from a stranger that lifts you up and floats you through your whole day. But how could such a glowing character exist? By making him man and child at the same time. To have no name, no history, no past, no memories, no prejudices—a *tabula rasa*, a clean slate—that is what made Longshot free. And it is that stance in the world—innocence, total freedom, and a good clean spirit—that makes Longshot seem to be life itself, at its lightest wide-smiling moments.



January 1983 Ann Nocenti Super Editor illustration by Arthur Adams

Anyway, that was our intent. The goofy, bungling puppy dog that was the result is another matter entirely, but he has glimmers of his maker's intentions. Perhaps the silly naïve buoyancy of Longshot has to do with both Art Adams and myself being brand new and overenthusiastic to the comic book business. Art drew Longshot with a radiance and inner light that expressed perfectly the soul I imagined him to have.

Art and I have since gone on to work with the usual dark and grim characters that seem to populate this industry, but, in a burst of second childhood, we brought Longshot to life.

And one last note, all these stories would have still been scattered homeless scraps of word and image if it were not for the hard work and ever gentle support of Louise Simonson, without whom Longshot would have remained a brief gleam in an eye.

Ann Nocenti.

1989

Longshot TPB (1989) cover, by Arthur Adams

LONGSHOT by Ann Nocenti and Arthur Adams

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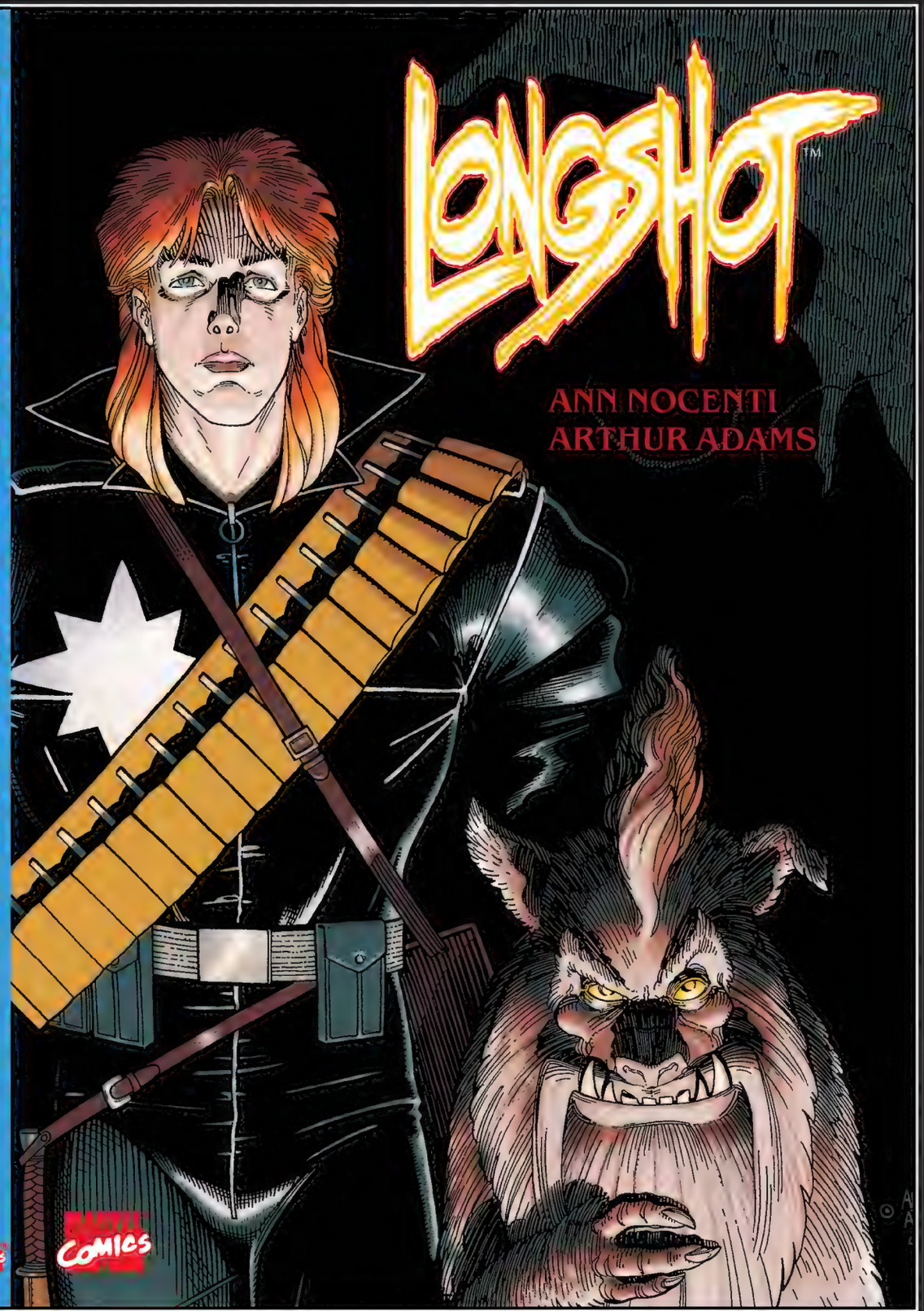


Reprinting *Longshot* #1-6

INTRODUCTION

BY ANN NOCENTI

FROM LONGSHOT PREMIERE CLASSIC (2008)

It's been at least two decades since Arthur Adams and I created Longshot, and it's difficult to access the intent of those youngsters. I was not familiar with the vast genealogical tree of the Marvel Universe when I answered an ad in the *Village Voice* for an "editorial and writing" job. Greeting me at the office on Madison Avenue were giant Captain America and Spider-Man cutouts, tilted and frayed, gazing at me askance, an obvious pretender to their domain.

Once inside the fortress, I was broadsided by a tsunami of history and character. There were multiple universes, alien invasions, every character seemed to have a doppelganger or an evil version, had already died and been resurrected, found out that their sister was really their mother, gone to hell and back, and, ultimately, had a thousand more parallel lives on T-shirts and lunch boxes. It was a knot of mythos and soap opera and beach towel franchises. To keep their fertile minds occupied, the Marvel staff would do things like tie helium "thought" balloons to their heads, come to work dressed in nothing but Saran Wrap, glue their office furniture to the ceiling so they could work upside-down, hold paddle ball "whack-offs," decide to run that month's comics out of bathroom stalls converted into offices, or simply show you their gun collection and cackle. There was a wonderful guy who ran the Bullpen—he'd tell you to rub his big belly for luck—and an in-house letterer who felt the heat coming off the top of your head and pinched your fingernails to tell you what vitamins you lacked. The place was full of panache and zing! as the storied spilled out of it. I loved it. And that's how I want to remember it.

As an overwhelmed newcomer, I craved something simple. I'd read the bios of the characters I was in charge of, and they read like Cliff's Notes for a Dostoyevsky novel. I was dying to be part of this wonderment, but needed to start…slow and simple.

I believe choosing the name Longshot had something to do with bending the odds: The whole enterprise was a long shot. There was a T.S. Eliot line, "purification of the motive in the ground of our beseeching," which I liked to recite before going out drinking in college. I'd had luck with that one, so decided motive and luck were tied together. And I thought the cat that slunk around my Manhattan loft looked cool when his one eye glowed in the dark, so I burdened Longshot with that affectation. One glowing eye. The reigning super heroes were candy-colored, but I was into film noir and chose black, or maybe Arthur did. Longshot was a *tabula rasa*, created out of a curiosity: If we forget who we were, then who are we? I had him drop to Earth an amnesiac…cliché now, to have a character with no memory, but back then it seemed fresh. And super heroes seemed so sexed-up (something I came to appreciate), but at the time I wanted Longshot to be a bit childlike, without a big swinging machismo. Longshot was a grab bag, a monster built of whatever was floating in the ethers of my world at the time. At least, that's the way I recall it.

Just as I was building my monster, some art samples arrived on my desk. Three blue-pencil pages of the Beast washing dishes and tossing them to another X-Man to dry. These pages were genius. Full of dizzy charm, antics, fluid energy, humor…and they came from a guy named Arthur Adams.

I sent Arthur my thousand-page opus about who I thought Longshot was, along with descriptions of Mojo, Ricochet Rita, Gog 'n' Magog, Major Domo and other minions. Arthur sent back a deluge of creativity so astounding in its breadth and power that it compelled me to create even deeper and more complex origins. His tossed-off sketches of extra minions, like the six-armed chick and the ram-head guy, were so compelling they became major characters. The next thing we knew we were sucked into the wonder that is the Marvel Universe and, well, the stories weren't so simple anymore.

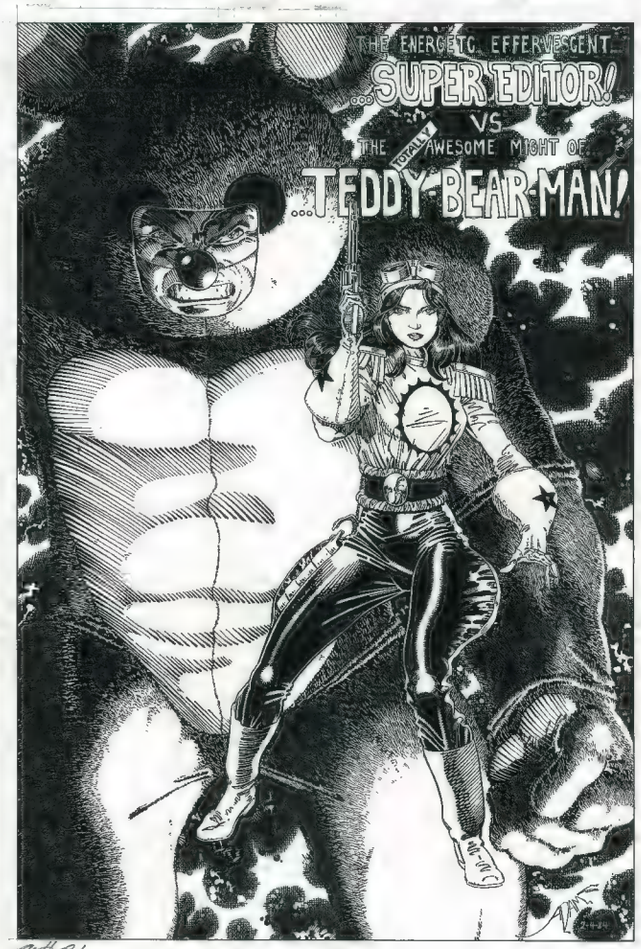
Not that any of this would have happened without Louise Simonson. She was the brilliant, prescient editor who allowed two dithering babies such as Arthur and I to have our very own comic. The one you hold collected now. Back then, in the times before some lipstick salesman wandered in and bought the company and corporatized it, it was easy to make comics. You had an idea, an editor said, "Sounds cool. Why not?" and you did it. Now there are pitches and proposals and committees, and a character like Longshot would be so tangled in red tape from it all he'd end up consigned to the reject bin long before he'd ever be given a chance to jump up and stick to a wall. Sigh.

About the caveats at the end of some of these paragraphs, about the fragility of recollection: I have been perplexed by the overlap of story and memory. For a long time I had a vivid memory of a tiny me riding a giant horse when very young. Later, when my family's Super-8 movies were transferred to video, I saw that I was in my father's lap, and that he was riding the horse. Why had I removed him from the memory? Was that closer to the essence of what was to come in life? Me, riding a horse alone? The idea of deep origins that we are so sure of, and of the stories we tell ourselves about who we are, and the suspicion that perhaps all memories are rewritten stories, all this led to the idea of Longshot having no past but rather a story he had to discover along the way. And maybe that's all it was, and all memory is, a story we tell ourselves. Or try to tell others. The actress Ingrid Bergman once said, "Happiness is good health and a bad memory." Forgetting is part of health. Remembering who you are now, not then.

I'll say one more thing about comics. Writing them for ten or so years kept me infantile. Developmentally challenged. I still live half my life in a fantasy world. Hallelujah.

Ann Nocenti

2008



February 1984 Ann Nocenti Super Editor illustration by Arthur Adams

X-Men: Ghosts TPB (2013) cover
by Rick Leonardi, Whilce Portacio & Thomas Mason

Reprinting *The Uncanny X-Men* #199-209 & *Annual* #10

X-Men: Ghosts TPB (2013) back cover
by John Romita Jr. & Thomas Mason

X-Men: Longshot Marvel Premiere Classic (2008) cover
by Arthur Adams & Chris Sotomayor

Reprinting *Longshot* #1-6

BIOGRAPHIES

CHRIS CLAREMONT

It is hard to remember a time when the word "mutant" didn't correspond with the largest and most ardently followed franchise in comics, but in the mid-'70s the X-Men were naught but a forgotten team of misfits. Chris Claremont and his collaborators took this moribund property and issue by issue transformed it into a phenomenon now known the world over.

Claremont began his career in comics in the early '70s pitching in on issues of *Avengers*, *Daredevil* and *Incredible Hulk*, while also delivering several text stories to Marvel's black-and-white magazines. His first regular writing gig was *War Is Hell*, a "weird war" title that came to a close just as his run on *X-Men* and *Iron Fist* began. *Iron Fist*, which rolled out of the pages of *Marvel Premiere*, was done in concert with artist John Byrne, forming a key partnership that would pay big dividends later. Other high-profile projects from Claremont's first full decade in comics included *Marvel Preview*'s Starlord, *Ms. Marvel*, *Marvel Team-Up* (again with Byrne) and *John Carter: Warlord of Mars*.

But it was in the pages of *X-Men* where Claremont would change comics history. In tandem with artists Dave Cockrum and John Byrne, Claremont helped build a cornerstone franchise for Marvel. After writer Len Wein launched the newly updated series in 1975 with *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, Claremont was tasked with guiding the new adventures of the mutant misfits, and he did so by crafting layered stories that balanced crisp dialogue with high-octane action. Claremont placed a premium on characterization, a lofty goal in a team book with many players, but he did so deftly enough to spin a wide-ranging tapestry of characters, each of whom became fan favorites.

Leading breathless fans down the path of classics including "The Dark Phoenix Saga," "Days of Future Past," and *God Loves, Man Kills*, he helped build such an intense loyalty that it only made sense to spin-off the X-Men's success into new books. The first such spin-off was *The New Mutants*. Later in the decade, Claremont launched *Excalibur* with Alan Davis and established a regular series for Wolverine with John Buscema.

In 1990, he launched a new sister title for the main team of mutants with Jim Lee; *X-Men* #1 premiered to numbers that made it the highest-selling comic ever. After a long break from the company, Claremont returned to Marvel in 2000, and over the next ten years wrote the novelization of Bryan Singer's X-Men film, took on the Fantastic Four, and charted the adventures of Marvel's mutants across a variety of titles. He was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame with its 2015 class.

JOHN ROMITA JR.

Like his legendary father, John Romita Jr. has become a comic-art master, establishing a powerful style uniquely his own. His life in comics began early, when as an adolescent he helped his father design the Spider-Man villain the Prowler. His first published work—cover art for Marvel UK and "Chaos at the Coffee Bean!" in *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #11—showed that he'd learned much from his father's figure drawing and storytelling sense. His first full-length project was a KISS feature in *Marvel Super-Special* #5. In the summer of 1978, he began a years long parternship on *Iron Man* with David Michelinie and Bob Layton. It was during his first *Iron Man* break that Romita Jr. took on full-time art duties on *Amazing Spider-Man* for the first of multiple acclaimed runs. During his Spidey tenure he also helped launch *Dazzler* and penciled the first Marvel miniseries, *Marvel Super Hero Contest of Champions*. In 1983, Romita Jr. joined Chris Claremont's *Uncanny X-Men*, taking over the industry's most popular comic for a three-year run that saw his art dramatically evolve in tone. After a stint on the New Universe series *Starbrand*, he rebounded with a pair of *Amazing Spider-Man* issues that included Peter Parker's proposal to Mary Jane Watson. Next, Romita Jr. began a run on *Daredevil* with writer Ann Nocenti, introducing Typhoid Mary and establishing himself as one of the definitive *Daredevil* artists. After a third run on *Iron Man*, his credits included *Punisher War Zone*, *Daredevil: The Man Without Fear* with Frank Miller, a return to *Uncanny X-Men*, and long runs on *Spider-Man*, *Thor* and *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*. As the new century dawned, the ever more popular Romita Jr. kept adding to his superstar resume with stints on *Amazing Spider-Man* with J. Michael Straczynski, *Wolverine* with Mark Millar, *Eternals* with Neil Gaiman, and the *World War Hulk* event. His collaboration with Millar spawned their creator-owned series *Kick-Ass*, which led to a blockbuster feature film. In recent years, he has returned once more to *Amazing Spider-Man*, helped relaunch *Avengers* with Brian Michael Bendis and *Captain America* with Rick Remender, and beginning in 2014, Romita moved to DC where his runs on *Superman* and *All-Star Batman* have topped sales charts.

ANN NOCENTI

Ann Nocenti's role as editor and writer at Marvel in the '80s marked her as one of the company's most influential creators of the decade. Titles under her stewardship as editor included *The Incredible Hulk*, *ROM* and *Star Wars*, but it was the X-Men universe titles that were Nocenti's main focus. She edited *The Uncanny X-Men* during the era that encompassed the classic tenure of artist John Romita Jr., iconic stories by Barry Windsor-Smith and the "Mutant Massacre" and "Fall of the Mutants" events, all in collaboration with writer Chris Claremont. Nocenti also edited *New Mutants*, *X-Men and Alpha Flight*, *Kitty Pryde and Wolverine* and *Firestar*. But it was writing that she most wanted to pursue.

Her first series work was writing the final four issues of *Spider-Woman*, and she scripted the Dazzler/Beast team-up miniseries *Beauty and the Beast*. It was her next title that would elevate her

to new heights in the industry: The 1985 miniseries *Longshot*, done in collaboration with then-unknown artist Arthur Adams, introduced the dimension-jumping Longshot and his media-manipulating archfoe Mojo. Next up for Nocenti was a pair of *Web of Spider-Man* annuals and an acclaimed four-and-a-half-year run on *Daredevil*. Paired with artists John Romita Jr. and Lee Weeks, Nocenti's *Daredevil* balanced the vigilante lawyer's quest for social justice with his battles against super villains and featured the debut of Typhoid Mary. Nocenti went to Vertigo to scribe *Kid Eternity* but continued to work at Marvel through much of the '90s until she left comics for journalism and film. She returned to comics in the 2010s, when she scripted series such as DC's *Green Arrow*, *Katana* and *Catwoman*.

ARTHUR ADAMS

Arthur Adams has been drawing for as long as he can remember. Born into an Air Force family in 1963, Adams moved around the country with his family until his father was stationed in Vacaville, CA, where they were able to put down roots. Arthur's mother would bring home stacks of comic books from her monthly trips to the thrift store, giving him an early education in the art form. But his main interest as a kid was in drawing dinosaurs and classic monster-movie characters.

It wasn't until he bought the first issue of *Micronauts* in 1979, drawn by Michael Golden, that he realized it was comics that he wanted to pursue. He picked up other influences such as Bernie Wrightson, Bill Sienkiewicz and Walter Simonson. At the age of 19, he wrote a piece of fan mail to *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew!* and included a pinup of a character named Fara Foxette in an homage to the famous '70s poster of Farrah Fawcett. *Zoo Crew* creator Roy Thomas loved it so much he paid Adams $10 to publish it, and Adams was off and running in a career in comic book art.

After samples of his work made their way through Marvel Editorial, the promising talent was assigned to an unassuming miniseries in development writer/editor by Ann Nocenti. That series, *Longshot*, would make a star out of Adams. His detailed and dynamic pencils carried a joyful energy that made him an instant fan-favorite and also introduced many American readers to manga-influenced artwork. Both Adams and the character he co-created were soon brought into the X-Men's orbit. Chris Claremont teamed with Adams on special issues such as *New Mutants Special Edition* #1 and numerous *X-Men Annuals*. Adams would also draw issues of *X-Factor*, the *Excalibur: Mojo Mayhem* graphic novel and the three-part "New Fantastic Four."

At DC, Adams drew *Action Comics Annual* #1 starring both Superman and Batman, raising his profile to a wider audience. The whimsical Adams was perfectly suited for a pair of Gumby specials for Comico, which earned him and collaborator Bob Burden an Eisner Award for Best Single Issue. At Dark Horse, he channeled his love of monsters into an adaptation of the '50s film classic *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* and *Godzilla Color Special*, which Adams also scripted. He also launched his series *Monkeyman and O'Brien* through Dark Horse's creator-owned imprint Legend. At Wildstorm, Adams drew *Gen13* and *The Authority* and co-created the Jonni Future serial in *Tom Strong's Terrific Tales*. His recent work has included collaborations with writer Jeph Loeb on *Hulk* and *Ultimate Comics: X* and scores of cover art.

JUNE BRIGMAN

The Atlanta-born June Brigman took her childhood passion of drawing to her studies at college, majoring in art at the University of Georgia. Though Brigman didn't read comics as a child, she was intent on becoming a professional artist, and after attending a comic book convention, she turned her ambitions toward the industry. With some guidance from Marvel artists Bob McLeod and Carl Potts, she taught herself the ins and outs of drawing in her new idiom. Her first major work with Marvel would also be one of her most enduring: co-creating *Power Pack* with writer Louise Simonson. Brigman would pencil much of the series' original run, while also drawing *Alpha Flight*, *She-Hulk: Ceremony* and an issue of *The Uncanny X-Men* featuring Nightcrawler. Brigman's other comics work would include a *Supergirl* miniseries for DC and *Star Wars: River of Chaos* for Dark Horse. Brigman then turned her attention to newspaper strips, taking over *Brenda Starr* from 1995 to the strip's end in 2011 and *Mary Worth* since 2016. Beginning in 2018, she collaborated with writer Stuart Moore on the AHOY series *Captain Ginger*, starring a cast of space-faring cats. Brigman also spent time as an instructor at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Arts and at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Atlanta. She also won an Inkpot Award in 2014 acknowledging her career contributions to the comics medium.

RICK LEONARDI

As soon as Rick Leonardi graduated from Dartmouth College in 1979, he sent Marvel and DC a self-written and -drawn comic book that spoke to his artistic potential. Marvel wrote back, encouraging him to take a job with them. In his first years in comics, Leonardi eased himself into the business with a handful of stories in *Thor* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. After proving himself, he landed a pair of higher-profile gigs with writer Bill Mantlo on the 1982 miniseries *The Vision and the Scarlet Witch* and *Cloak and Dagger*. After penciling issues of *The Amazing Spider-Man*—and being a part of the development of Spider-Man's new black costume with Mike Zeck—Leonardi reunited with Mantlo to launch an ongoing *Cloak and Dagger* series in 1985. He followed that up with Marvel's top-selling X-titles, drawing a Colossus serial in *Marvel Comics Presents* and several issues of *The Uncanny X-Men* and *The New Mutants*. In 1992, Leonardi and Peter David created Miguel O'Hara in *Spider-Man 2099*, a series Leonardi would draw for most of the first 25 issues of its run. In the late '90s, Leonardi drew the five-issue series *Painkiller Jane* for Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's Event Comics, and in the 2000s, he would head to DC for stints with *Batgirl*, *Vigilante* and *Nightwing*. A longtime fan of Batman, Leonardi's most recent project is the ongoing series *Batman Beyond*.

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH

A brash newcomer to the American comics scene in the late '60s, London-born Barry Windsor-Smith rose from drawing his first American comics work on a New York City park bench to become one of the medium's most influential artists, driving his passion for pre-Raphaelite naturalism and Art Nouveau design into mainstream comics.

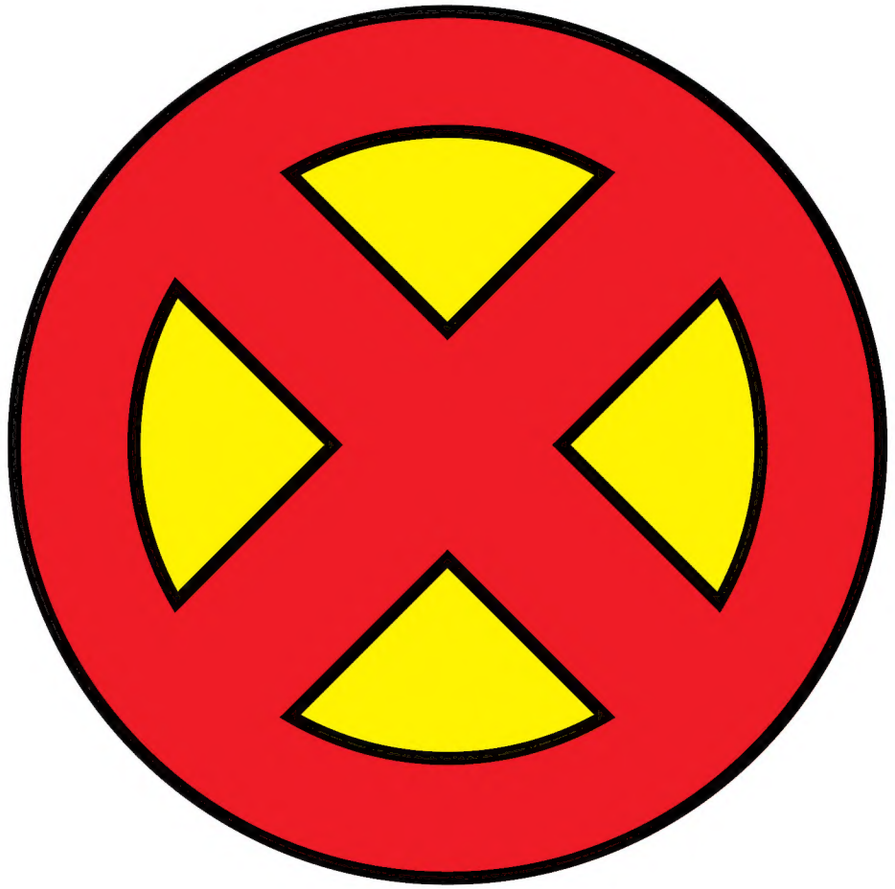
Influenced from an early age by artists like Jack Kirby and Gil Kane, Windsor-Smith made it a goal to one day work for Marvel Comics. His first professional forays produced artwork for *X-Men*, *Daredevil* and *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, all of which revealed a young man ardently working to define his own voice while mastering the lessons of his artistic forebears.

He first stepped out in a big way on *Conan the Barbarian,* Marvel's adaptation of Robert E. Howard's sword and sorcery character. It was here that Windsor-Smith developed a stunningly fresh approach to comic-art draftsmanship, holding on to Kirby's dynamic energy but pouring an increasing amount of time into detailed, lyrical figure drawing. As his skills developed, it became clear that Windsor-Smith's work on *Conan* was a clarion call for comic artists who wanted to take a more refined approach to their illustration.

In addition to making Conan into a bona fide hit, Windsor-Smith also turned in memorable work on *Avengers*, Doctor Strange in *Marvel Premiere* and Ka-Zar in *Astonishing Tales*, after which he started Gorblimey Press, his own studio that produced original prints and stories entirely of his own making, a concern that is still ongoing today.

A return to Marvel in 1984 produced a handful of projects that made a huge impression: a Machine Man limited series; the groundbreaking excursion into Wolverine's origin, "Weapon X"; "Lifedeath," a pair of timeless Storm stories told in *Uncanny X-Men*, and a myriad of classic covers, including several for *Conan Saga.*

In 1991, Windsor-Smith took on the role of creative director for Valiant Comics, an upstart company formed by former Marvel editor in chief Jim Shooter. The Valiant line, including Windsor-Smith's *Archer and Armstrong*, *Solar: Man of the Atom* and *Unity*, was a big hit in part to Windsor-Smith's masterful work. His most recent regular work was in Malibu Comics' *Rune*, Dark Horse's *BWS: Storyteller* anthology and his series of autobiographical art books, *Opus*. His accomplishments within the field were recognized by the Eisner Hall of Fame in 2008.



Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These trailblazing talents birthed a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-22
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-3
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-20
THE BLACK PANTHER VOLS. 1-3
BROTHER VOODOO VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-12
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-6
THE CHAMPIONS VOL. 1
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-15
DAZZLER VOLS. 1-2
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-7
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-9
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-22
GHOST RIDER VOLS. 1-2
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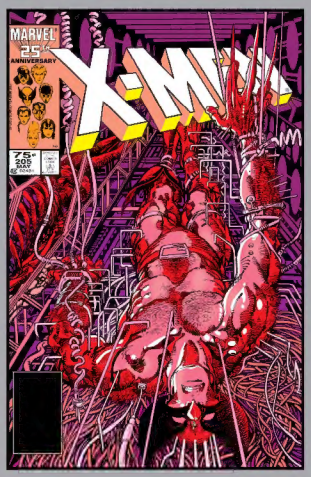
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